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"'WHY, WAS IT NOT FOOLISH OF ME TO COUNT THE STARS IN THE SKY, WHEN I COULD HAVE COUNTED THE STARS IN YOUR BRILLIANT PLUMAGE TO BETTER ADVANTAGE?' SAID THE FOX"

96.

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GARDEN CITY

THE TALKING BEASTS

A BOOK OF FABLE WISDOM

EDITED BY
KATE DOUGLAS WIGGIN
AND
NORA ARCHIBALD SMITH

Illustrations by Harold Nelson

GARDEN CITY, N. Y., AND TORONTO
DOUBLEDAY, PAGE & COMPANY
1922

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"Accept, young Prince, the moral lay
And in these tales mankind survey;
With early virtues plant your breast
The specious arts of vice detest."

JOHN GAY
TO
HIS HIGHNESS
WILLIAM, DUKE OF CUMBERLAND

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For Eastern princes, long ago,
These fables, grave and gay,
Were written as a friendly guide
On life's perplexing way.
When Rumour came to court and news
Of such a book was heard,
The monarch languished till he might
Secure the Golden Word.

Prince of To-day, this little book
A store-house is of treasure.
Unlock it and where'er you look
Is wisdom without measure.
'Twill teach thee of the meed of greed,
Of sowing versus reaping,
Of that mad haste that makes for waste,
And looking before leaping.

'Twill teach thee what is like to hap
To self-conceit and folly;
And show that who begins in sin
Will end in melancholy.
So take the book and learn of beast
And animate creation
The lesson that the least may teach,
However mean his station.

NORA ARCHIBALD SMITH

INTRODUCTION

"Among all the different ways of giving counsel I think the finest and that which pleases the most universally is fable, in whatever shape it appears."

JOSEPH ADDISON

HOW *shall I bring to your mind the time and distance that separate us from the Age of Fable? Think of what seemed to you the longest week of your life. Think of fifty-two of these in a year; then think of two thousand five hundred years and try to realize that Æsop — sometimes called the Eighth Wise Man — lived twenty-five centuries ago and made these wonderful tales that delight us to-day.*

Shakespeare is even yet something of a mystery, although he was born in our own era, less than five hundred years ago; but men are still trying to discover any new facts of his life that might better explain his genius. A greater mystery is grand old Homer, who has puzzled the world for centuries. Scholars are not certain whether the "Iliad" or "Odyssey" are the work of one or more than one mind. Who can say? for the

thrilling tales were told — probably after the fashion of all the minstrels of his day — more than eight hundred years before Christ.

On the background of that dim distant long ago, perhaps two hundred years later than Homer, looms the magnificent figure of another mysterious being — Æsop the Greek slave.

Wherever and whenever he lived, and whether, in fact, he ever lived at all, he seems very real to us, even though more than two thousand years have passed. Among all the stories that scholars and historians have told of him — sifting through the centuries the true from the false — we get a vivid picture of the man. He was born in Greece, probably in Phrygia, about 620 years before Christ. He had more than one master and it was the last, Iadmon, who gave him his liberty because of his talents and his wisdom. The historian Plutarch recounts his presence at the court of Crœsus, King of Lydia, and his meeting Thales and Solon there, telling us also that he reproved the wise Solon for discourtesy toward the king. Æsop visited Athens and composed the famous fable of Jupiter and the Frogs for the instruction of the citizens. Whether he left any written fables is very uncertain, but those known by his name were popular in Athens when that city was celebrated throughout the world for its wit and its

learning. Both Socrates and Plato delighted in them; Socrates, we read, having amused himself during the last days of his life with turning into verse some of Æsop's "myths" as he called them. Think of Socrates conning these fables in prison four hundred years before Christ, and then think of a more familiar picture in our own day — a gaunt, dark-faced, black-haired boy poring over a book as he lay by the fireside in a little Western farmhouse; for you remember that Abraham Lincoln's literary models were "Æsop's Fables," "The Pilgrim's Progress" and the Bible. Perhaps he read the fable of the Fig Tree, Olive, Vine, and Bramble from the ninth chapter of Judges, or that of the Thistle and Cedar from the fourteenth chapter of II Kings and noted that teaching by story-telling was still well in vogue six hundred years after Æsop.

In later times the fables that had been carried from mouth to mouth for centuries began to be written down: by Phædrus in Latin and Babrius in Greek; also, in the fourteenth century, by a Greek monk named Planudes. But do not suppose they had their birth or flourished in Greece alone. At the very time that Æsop was telling them at the court of Crœsus, or in Delphi, Corinth, or Athens,—far, far away in

India the Buddhist priests were telling fables in the Sanskrit language to the common people, the blind, the ignorant and the outcast. Sanskrit, you know, is the eldest brother of all the family of languages to which our English belongs. When the Buddhist religion declined, the Brahmins took up the priceless inheritance of fable and used it for educational purposes. Their ancient Indian sages and philosophers compiled a treatise for the education of princes which was supposed to contain a system of good counsel for right training in all the chief affairs of life. In it they inserted the choicest treasures of their wisdom and the best rules for governing a people, and the Rajahs kept the book with great secrecy and care. Then a Persian king heard of its existence and sent a learned physician to India, where he spent several years in copying and translating the precious manuscript, finally bringing it back to the court, where he declined to accept all reward but a dress of honour. In much the same way it was rendered into Arabic and gradually, century by century, crept into the literature of all Europe.

We give you some of these very fables in the "Hitopadesa," which means "Friendly Instruction" or "Amicable Advice," for the

original books contained many maxims, like the following:

"He who is not possessed of such a book as will dispel many doubts, point out hidden treasures, and is, as it were, a mirror of all things, is even an ignorant man."

"These six — the peevish, the niggard, the dissatisfied, the passionate, the suspicious, and those who live upon others' means — are forever unhappy."

"That mother is an enemy, and that father a foe, by whom not having been instructed, their son shineth not in the assembly; but appeareth there like a booby among geese."

"There are two kinds of knowledge in use: the knowledge of arms, and the knowledge of books. The first is the scoff of the wise, whilst the last is forever honoured."

We give you other Indian fables from the collection of Bidpai. La Fontaine in one of the prefaces to his French fables in verse expresses his gratitude to "Bilpay the Indian sage." These are the very manuscripts translated from the Sanskrit into Persian by the physician who took them back to his king. Sir William Jones says that "Bidpai" signifies "beloved physician" and that Bilpay is simply a mis-spelling of the word. As other scholars contended that Bidpai was not a man at all, but probably one of the two wise camels that did most of the talking in the earlier fables, you and I will not be able to settle the truth

of the question. All these points are interesting, or, if they are not so to you, you must say, "Wake up!" to your mind. It is the eager spirit of inquiry that conquers difficulties and gains knowledge. In another preface I reminded you that in all the faery stories the youngest brother was the one who always said, "I wonder!" and he it was who triumphed over all the others. You are holding between these crimson covers fables from some of the oldest and most valuable books the world has ever known. The "Hitopadesa" was a very fountain of riches, as old as the hills themselves, precious and inexhaustible. In its innumerable translations it passed down the stream of time, and the fables known as Æsop's made their way among all races of people in the same marvellous way. No one knows whether Æsop — through the Assyrians with whom the Phrygians had commercial relations — borrowed his stories from the Orientals or whether they borrowed from him. One thing is certain, nothing persists so strongly and lives so long as a fable or folk tale. They migrate like the birds and make their way into every corner of the world where there are lips to speak and ears to hear. The reasons are, perhaps, because they are generally brief; because they are simple; because they are trenchant and witty; because they are fresh and captivating and

bronze easy chair. Perhaps the Grecian children of long ago played about Æsop's statue in Athens, for Lysippus the celebrated sculptor designed and erected a monument in his memory.

Read Krilof's "Education of a Lion" and "The Lion and the Mosquitoes" while his life is fresh in your mind. Then turn to "What Employment our Lord Gave to Insects" and "How Sense was Distributed," in the quaint African fables. Glance at "The Long-tailed Spectacled Monkey" and "The Tune that Made the Tiger Drowsy," so full of the very atmosphere of India. Then re-read some old favourite of Æsop and imagine you are hearing his voice, or that of some Greek story-teller of his day, ringing down through more than two thousand years of time.

There is a deal of preaching in all these fables,— that cannot be denied,— but it is concealed as well as possible. It is so disagreeable for people to listen while their faults and follies, their foibles and failings, are enumerated, that the fable-maker told his truths in story form and thereby increased his audience. Preaching from the mouths of animals is not nearly so trying as when it comes from the pulpit, or from the lips of your own family and friends!

Whether or not our Grecian and Indian, African

and Russian fable-makers have not saddled the animals with a few more faults than they possess — just to bolster up our pride in human nature — I sometimes wonder; but the result has been beneficial. The human rascals and rogues see themselves clearly reflected in the doings of the jackals, foxes, and wolves and may get some little distaste for lying, deceit and trickery.

We make few fables now-a-days. We might say that it is a lost art, but perhaps the world is too old to be taught in that precise way, and though the story writers are as busy as ever, the story-tellers (alas!) are growing fewer and fewer.

If your ear has been opened by faery tales you will have learned already to listen to and interpret a hundred voices unheard by others. A comprehension of faery language leads one to understand animal conversation with perfect ease, so open the little green doors that lead into the forest, the true Land of Fable. Open them softly and you will hear the Beasts talk Wisdom.

KATE DOUGLAS WIGGIN

THE FABLES OF ÆSOP

"'Twas the Golden Age when every brute
Had voice articulate, in speech was skilled,
And the mid-forests with its synods filled.
The tongues of rock and pine-leaf then were free;
To ship and sailor then would speak the sea;
Sparrows with farmers would shrewd talk maintain;
Earth gave all fruits, nor asked for toil again.
Mortals and gods were wont to mix as friends —
To which conclusion all the teaching tends
Of sage old Æsop."

BABRIUS

THE FABLES OF ÆSOP

The Power of Fables

DEMADES, a famous Greek orator, was once addressing an assembly at Athens on a subject of great importance, and in vain tried to fix the attention of his hearers. They laughed among themselves, watched the sports of the children, and in twenty other ways showed their want of interest in the subject of the discourse.

Demades, after a short pause, spoke as follows:

"Ceres one day journeyed in company with a Swallow and an Eel." At this there was marked attention and every ear strained now to catch the words of the orator. "The party came to a river," continued he; "the Eel swam across, and the Swallow flew over." He then resumed the subject of his harangue.

A great cry, however, arose from the people, "And Ceres? and Ceres?" cried they. "What did Ceres do?"

"Why, the goddess was, as she is now,"

replied he, "mightily offended that people should have their ears open to any sort of foolery, and shut to words of truth and wisdom."

The Wolf and the Lamb

A HUNGRY Wolf one day saw a Lamb drinking at a stream, and wished to frame some plausible excuse for making him his prey.

"What do you mean by muddling the water I am going to drink?" fiercely said he to the Lamb.

"Pray forgive me," meekly answered the Lamb; "I should be sorry in any way to displease you, but as the stream runs from you toward me, you will see that such cannot be the case."

"That's all very well," said the Wolf; "but you know you spoke ill of me behind my back a year ago."

"Nay, believe me," replied the Lamb, "I was not then born."

"It must have been your brother, then," growled the Wolf.

"It cannot have been, for I never had any," answered the Lamb.

"I know it was one of your lot," rejoined the Wolf, "so make no more such idle excuses." He then seized the poor Lamb, carried him off to the woods, and ate him, but before

"'WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY MUDDLING THE WATER I AM GOING TO DRINK?' FIERCELY SAID HE TO THE LAMB"

the poor creature died he gasped out, feebly, "Any excuse will serve a tyrant."

Æsop and His Fellow Servants

A Merchant, who was at one time Æsop's master, on a certain occasion ordered all things to be made ready for an intended journey. When the burdens were divided among the Servants, Æsop asked that he might have the lightest. He was told to choose for himself, and he took up the basket of bread. The other Servants laughed, for that was the largest and heaviest of all the burdens.

When dinner-time came, Æsop, who had with some difficulty sustained his load, was told to distribute an equal share all around. He did so, and this lightened his burden one half, and when supper-time arrived he got rid of the rest.

For the remainder of the journey he had nothing but the empty basket to carry, and the other Servants, whose loads seemed to get heavier and heavier at every step, could not but applaud his ingenuity.

The Kite and the Pigeons

A Kite, that had kept sailing around a dovecote for many days to no purpose, was at last

forced by hunger to have recourse to stratagem. Approaching the Pigeons in his gentlest manner, he described to them in an eloquent speech how much better their state would be if they had a king with some firmness about him, and how well such a ruler would shield them from the attacks of the Hawk and other enemies.

The Pigeons, deluded by this show of reason, admitted him to the dovecote as their king. They found, however, that he thought it part of his kingly prerogative to eat one of their number every day, and they soon repented of their credulity in having let him in.

The Ant and the Fly

An Ant and a Fly one day disputed as to their respective merits. "Vile creeping insect!" said the Fly to the Ant, "can you for a moment compare yourself with me? I soar on the wing like a bird. I enter the palaces of kings, and alight on the heads of princes, nay, of emperors, and only quit them to adorn the yet more attractive brow of beauty. Besides, I visit the altars of the gods. Not a sacrifice is offered but it is first tasted by me. Every feast, too, is open to me. I eat and drink of the best, instead of living for days on two or three grains of corn as you do."

"All that is very fine," replied the Ant; "but listen to me. You boast of your feasting, but you know that your diet is not always so choice, and you are sometimes forced to eat what nothing would induce me to touch. As for alighting on the heads of kings and emperors, you know very well that whether you pitch on the head of an emperor or of an ass (and it is as often on the one as the other), you are shaken off from both with impatience. And, then, the 'altars of the gods,' indeed! There and everywhere else you are looked upon as nothing but a nuisance. In the winter, too, while I feed at my ease on the fruit of my toil, what more common than to see your friends dying with cold, hunger, and fatigue? I lose my time now in talking to you. Chattering will fill neither my bin nor my cupboard."

The Frog Who Wished to Be as Big as an Ox

An Ox, grazing in a meadow, chanced to set his foot on a young Frog and crushed him to death. His brothers and sisters, who were playing near, at once ran to tell their mother what had happened.

"The monster that did it, mother, was such a size!" said they.

The mother, who was a vain old thing,

thought that she could easily make herself as large.

"Was it as big as this?" she asked, blowing and puffing herself out.

"Oh, much bigger than that," replied the young Frogs.

"As this, then?" cried she, puffing and blowing again with all her might.

"Nay, mother," said they; "if you were to try till you burst yourself, you could never be so big."

The silly old Frog then tried to puff herself out still more, and burst herself indeed.

The Cat and the Mice

A CERTAIN house was overrun with mice. A Cat, discovering this, made her way into it and began to catch and eat them one by one.

The Mice being continually devoured, kept themselves close in their holes.

The Cat, no longer able to get at them, perceived that she must tempt them forth by some device. For this purpose she jumped upon a peg, and, suspending herself from it, pretended to be dead.

One of the Mice, peeping stealthily out, saw her, and said, "Ah, my good madam, even

though you should turn into a meal-bag, we would not come near you."

The Cock and the Jewel

A BRISK young Cock, scratching for something with which to entertain his favourite Hens, happened to turn up a Jewel. Feeling quite sure that it was something precious, but not knowing well what to do with it, he addressed it with an air of affected wisdom, as follows: "You are a very fine thing, no doubt, but you are not at all to my taste. For my part, I would rather have one grain of dear delicious barley than all the Jewels in the world."

The Man and the Lion

A MAN and a Lion were discussing the relative strength of men and lions in general, the Man contending that he and his fellows were stronger than lions by reason of their greater intelligence.

"Come now with me," he cried to the beast, "and I will soon prove that I am right." So he took him into the public gardens and showed him a statue of Hercules overcoming the Lion and tearing him to pieces.

"That is all very well," said the Lion, "but

it proves nothing, for it was a man who made the statue!"

The Discontented Ass

In the depth of winter a poor Ass once prayed heartily for the spring, that he might exchange a cold lodging and a heartless truss of straw for a little warm weather and a mouthful of fresh grass. In a short time, according to his wish, the warm weather and the fresh grass came on, but brought with them so much toil and business that he was soon as weary of the spring as before of the winter, and he now became impatient for the approach of summer. The summer arrived; but the heat, the harvest work and other drudgeries and inconveniences of the season set him as far from happiness as before, which he now flattered himself would be found in the plenty of autumn. But here, too, he was disappointed; for what with the carrying of apples, roots, fuel for the winter, and other provisions, he was in autumn more fatigued than ever.

Having thus trod around the circle of the year, in a course of restless labour, uneasiness and disappointment, and found no season, nor station of life without its business and its trouble, he was forced at last to acquiesce in

the comfortless season of winter, where his complaint began, convinced that in this world every situation has its inconvenience.

The Boasting Traveller

A Man was one day entertaining a lot of fellows in an ale-house with an account of the wonders he had done when abroad on his travels. "I was once at Rhodes," said he, "and the people of Rhodes, you know, are famous for jumping. Well, I took a jump there that no other man could come within a yard of. That's a fact, and if we were there I could bring you ten men who would prove it."

"What need is there to go to Rhodes for witnesses?" asked one of his hearers; "just imagine that you are there now, and show us your leap!"

The Lion and the Mouse

A Lion, tired with the chase, lay sleeping at full length under a shady tree. Some Mice, scrambling over him while he slept, awoke him. Laying his paw upon one of them, he was about to crush him, but the Mouse implored his mercy in such moving terms that he let him go.

Now it happened that some time afterward the Lion was caught in a net laid by some hunters, and, unable to free himself, made the forest resound with his roars. The Mouse, recognizing the voice of his preserver, ran to the spot, and with his little sharp teeth gnawed the ropes asunder and set the Lion free.

The Swallow and Other Birds

A SWALLOW, observing a Husbandman employed in sowing hemp, called the little Birds together and informed them of what the farmer was about. He told them that hemp was the material from which the nets, so fatal to the feathered race, were composed; and advised them to join unanimously in picking it up in order to prevent the consequences.

The Birds, either disbelieving his information or neglecting his advice, gave themselves no trouble about the matter. In a little time the hemp appeared above the ground, when the friendly Swallow again addressed himself to them, and told them it was not yet too late, provided they would immediately set about the work, before the seeds had taken too deep root. But as they still rejected his advice, he forsook their society, repaired for safety to towns and cities, there built his habitation and kept his residence.

One day as he was skimming along the streets he happened to see a large parcel of those very Birds imprisoned in a cage on the shoulders of a bird-catcher.

"Unhappy wretches," said he. "You now feel punishment for your former neglect; but those who, having no foresight of their own, despise the wholesome admonition of their friends, deserve the mischief which their own obstinacy or negligence brings upon their heads."

The Fox and the Crow

A Fox once saw a Crow fly off with a piece of cheese in its beak and settle on a branch of a tree. "That's for me, as I am a Fox," said Master Reynard, and he walked up to the foot of the tree. "Good-day, Mistress Crow," he cried. "How well you are looking to-day; how glossy your feathers, how bright your eye. I feel sure your voice must surpass that of other birds, just as your figure does; let me hear but one song from you that I may greet you as the Queen of Birds."

The Crow lifted up her head and began to caw her best, but the moment she opened her mouth the piece of cheese fell to the ground, only to be snapped up by Master Fox. "That will do," said he. "That was all I wanted.

In exchange for your cheese I will give you a piece of advice for the future — Do not trust flatterers!"

The Dog and His Shadow

A Dog, bearing in his mouth a piece of meat that he had stolen, was once crossing a smooth stream by means of a plank. Looking into the still, clear water, he saw what he took to be another dog as big as himself, carrying another piece of meat.

Snapping greedily to get this as well, he let go the meat that he already had, and it fell to the bottom of the stream.

The Ass and His Master

A diligent Ass, already loaded beyond his strength by a severe Master whom he had long served, and who kept him on very short commons, happened one day in his old age to be oppressed with a more than ordinary burden of earthenware. His strength being much impaired, and the road steep and uneven, he unfortunately made a misstep, and, unable to recover himself, fell down and broke all the vessels to pieces. His Master, transported with rage, began to beat him most unmercifully, against

whom the poor Ass, lifting up his head as he lay on the ground, thus strongly remonstrated:

"Unfeeling wretch! To thine own avaricious cruelty in first pinching me on food, and then loading me beyond my strength, thou owest the misfortune which thou so unjustly imputest to me."

The Wolf and the Crane

A Wolf once devoured his prey so ravenously that a bone stuck in his throat, giving him great pain. He ran howling up and down in his suffering and offered to reward handsomely any one who would pull the bone out.

A Crane, moved by pity as well as by the prospect of the money, undertook the dangerous task, and having removed the bone, asked for the promised reward.

"Reward!" cried the Wolf; "pray, you greedy fellow, what greater reward can you possibly require? You have had your head in my mouth, and instead of biting it off I have let you pull it out unharmed. Get away with you, and don't come again within reach of my paw."

The Hares and the Frogs

The Hares once took serious counsel among themselves whether death itself would not be

preferable to their miserable condition. "What a sad state is ours," they said, "never to eat in comfort, to sleep ever in fear, to be startled by a shadow, and to fly with beating heart at the rustling of the leaves. Better death by far," and off they went accordingly to drown themselves in a neighbouring lake.

Some scores of Frogs, who were enjoying the moonlight on the bank, scared at the approach of the Hares, jumped into the water. The splash awoke fresh fears in the breasts of the timid Hares, and they came to a full stop in their flight.

Seeing this, one wise old fellow among them cried: "Hold, brothers! It seems that, weak and fearful as we are, beings exist that are more weak and fearful still. Why, then, should we seek to die? Let us rather make the best of our ills and learn to bear them as we should."

The Invalid Lion

A Lion, who had grown too old and feeble to go out and hunt for prey, could hardly find enough food to keep him from starving. But at last he thought of a plan for bringing the game within his reach.

He kept quite still in his den and made believe that he was very ill. When the other animals

heard of his distress, they came, one by one, to look at him and ask him how he felt. No sooner were they within his reach, however, than he seized upon them and ate them up.

After a good many beasts had lost their lives in this way a Fox came along.

"How do you feel to-day, friend Lion?" he asked, taking care to stand at a safe distance from the den.

"I am very ill," answered the Lion. "Won't you come inside a little while? It does me a great deal of good to see my kind friends."

"Thank you," said the Fox; "but I notice that all the tracks point toward your den and none point away from it," and so saying, he trotted merrily away.

The Travellers and the Bear

Two Men, about to journey through a forest, agreed to stand by each other in any dangers that might befall. They had not gone far before a savage Bear rushed out from a thicket and stood in their path.

One of the Travellers, a light, nimble fellow, climbed up into a tree. The other fell flat on his face and held his breath.

The Bear came up and smelled at him, and, taking him for dead, went off again into the

wood. The man in the tree then came down, and, rejoining his companion, asked him, with a mischievous smile, what was the wonderful secret that the Bear had whispered into his ear.

"Why," replied the other sulkily, "he told me to take care for the future and not to put any confidence in such cowardly rascals as you are!"

The Fox Without a Tail

A Fox was once caught in a trap by his tail, and in order to get away was forced to leave it behind him. Knowing that without a tail he would be a laughing-stock for all his fellows, he resolved to try to induce them to part with theirs. At the next assembly of Foxes, therefore, he made a speech on the unprofitableness of tails in general, and the inconvenience of a Fox's tail in particular, adding that he had never felt so easy as since he had given up his own.

When he had sat down, a sly old fellow rose, and waving his long brush with a graceful air, said, with a sneer, that if, like the last speaker, he had been so unfortunate as to lose his tail, nothing further would have been needed to convince him; but till such an accident should happen, he should certainly vote in favour of tails.

The Crab and Its Mother

One fine day two Crabs came out from their home to take a stroll on the sand. "Child," said the mother, "you are walking very ungracefully. You should accustom yourself to walking straight forward without twisting from side to side."

"Pray, mother," said the young one, "do but set the example yourself, and I will follow you!"

The Jackdaw with Borrowed Plumes

A Jackdaw, having dressed himself in feathers which had fallen from some Peacocks, strutted about in the company of those birds and tried to pass himself off as one of them.

They soon found him out, however, and pulled their plumes from him so roughly, and in other ways so battered him, that he would have been glad to rejoin his humble fellows, but they, in their turn, would have nothing to do with him, and driving him from their society, told him to remember that it is not only fine feathers that make fine birds.

The Farmer and His Dog

A Farmer who had just stepped into the field to close a gap in one of his fences found

on his return the cradle, where he had left his only child asleep, turned upside down, the clothes all torn and bloody, and his Dog lying near it besmeared also with blood. Convinced at once that the creature had destroyed his child, he instantly dashed out its brains with the hatchet in his hand; when, turning up the cradle, he found the child unhurt and an enormous serpent lying dead on the floor, killed by the faithful Dog, whose courage and fidelity in preserving the life of his son deserved another kind of reward.

These affecting circumstances afforded him a striking lesson upon how dangerous it is hastily to give way to the blind impulse of a sudden passion.

The Fox and the Countryman

A Fox, having been hunted hard and chased a long way, saw a Countryman at work in a wood and begged his assistance to some hiding-place. The man said he might go into his cottage, which was close by.

He was no sooner in than the huntsmen came up. "Have you seen a Fox pass this way?" said they. The Countryman said "No," but pointed at the same time toward the place where the Fox lay. The huntsmen did not take the hint, however, and made off again at full speed.

The Fox, who had seen all that took place through a chink in the wall, thereupon came out and was walking away without a word.

"Why, how now!" said the Countryman, "haven't you the manners to thank your host before you go?"

"Nay, nay," said the Fox; "if you had been as honest with your finger as you were with your tongue, I shouldn't have gone without saying good-bye."

Belling the Cat

A CERTAIN Cat that lived in a large country house was so vigilant and active in the performance of her duties that the Mice, finding their numbers grievously thinned, held a council with closed doors to consider what they had best do.

Many plans had been started and dismissed, when a young Mouse, rising and catching the eye of the President, said that he had a proposal to make that he was sure must meet with the approval of all. "If," said he, "the Cat should wear around her neck a little bell, every step she took would make it tinkle; then, ever forewarned of her approach, we should have time to reach our holes. By this simple means we should live in safety and defy her power."

The speaker resumed his seat with a complacent air, and a murmur of applause arose from the audience.

An old gray Mouse, with a merry twinkle in his eye, now got up and said that the plan of the last speaker was an admirable one, but he feared it had one drawback. He had not told them who should put the bell around the Cat's neck!

The Old Woman and Her Maids

A CERTAIN Old Woman had several Maids, whom she used to call to their work every morning at the crowing of the Cock.

The Maids, finding it grievous to have their sweet sleep disturbed so early, killed the Cock, thinking that when he was quiet they might enjoy their warm beds a little longer.

The Old Woman, however, vexed at the loss of the Cock, and suspecting them to be concerned in his death, from that time made them rise soon after midnight!

The Dog in the Manger

THERE was once a Dog who lay all day long in a manger where there was plenty of hay. It happened one day that a Horse, a Cow, a Sheep, and a Goat came one by one and wanted

to eat the hay. The Dog growled at them and would not let them have so much as a mouthful. Then an Ox came and looked in, but the Dog growled at him also.

"You selfish fellow," said the Ox; "you cannot eat the hay. Why do you want to keep it all to yourself?"

The Old Man and His Sons

An old Man had many Sons, who were always falling out with one another. He had often exhorted them to live together in harmony, but without result.

One day he called them around him and, producing a bundle of sticks, bade them each in turn to break it across. Each put forth all his strength, but the bundle still resisted their efforts.

Then, cutting the cord which bound the sticks together, he told his Sons to break them separately. This was done with the greatest ease.

"See, my Sons," exclaimed he, "the power of unity! Bound together by brotherly love, you may defy almost every mortal ill; divided, you will fall a prey to your enemies."

Hercules and the Wagoner

As a Wagoner was driving his wain through a miry lane, the wheels stuck fast in the clay

and the Horses could get on no farther. The Man immediately dropped on his knees and began crying and praying with all his might to Hercules to come and help him.

"Lazy fellow!" cried Hercules, "get up and stir yourself. Whip your Horses stoutly, and put your shoulder to the wheel. If you want my help then, you shall have it."

The Goose with the Golden Eggs

ONE day a poor countryman going to the nest of his Goose found there a golden egg all yellow and glittering. When he took it up it felt as heavy as lead and he was minded to throw it away, because he thought a trick had been played on him.

On second thoughts, he took it home, however, and soon found to his delight that it was an egg of pure gold. Every morning the same thing occurred, and he soon became prosperous by selling his eggs.

As he grew rich he grew greedy; and thinking to get at once all the gold the Goose could give, he killed it and opened it only to find — nothing!

The Frogs Desiring a King

THE Frogs, living an easy, free sort of life among the lakes and ponds, once prayed Jupiter to send them a King.

Jove, being at that time in a merry mood, threw them a Log, saying, as he did so, "There, then, is a King for you."

Awed by the splash, the Frogs watched their King in fear and trembling, till at last, encouraged by his stillness, one more daring than the rest jumped upon the shoulder of the monarch. Soon, many others followed his example, and made merry on the back of their unresisting King. Speedily tiring of such a torpid ruler, they again petitioned Jupiter, and asked him to send them something more like a King.

This time he sent them a Stork, who tossed them about and gobbled them up without mercy. They lost no time, therefore, in beseeching the god to give them again their former state.

"No, no," replied he, "a King that did you no harm did not please you. Make the best of the one you have, or you may chance to get a worse in his place."

The Porcupine and the Snakes

A Porcupine, seeking for shelter, desired some Snakes to give him admittance into their cave. They accordingly let him in, but were afterward so annoyed by his sharp, prickly quills that they repented of their easy compliance,

and entreated him to withdraw and leave them their hole to themselves.

"No, no," said he, "let them quit the place that don't like it; for my part, I am very well satisfied as I am."

The Lark and Her Young Ones

A Lark, who had Young Ones in a field of grain which was almost ripe, was afraid that the reapers would come before her young brood was fledged. Every day, therefore, when she flew off to look for food, she charged them to take note of what they heard in her absence, and to tell her of it when she came home.

One day, when she was gone, they heard the owner of the field say to his son that the grain seemed ripe enough to be cut, and tell him to go early the next day and ask their friends and neighbours to come and help reap it.

When the old Lark came home, the Little Ones quivered and chirped around her, and told her what had happened, begging her to take them away as fast as she could. The mother bade them to be easy; "for," said she, "if he depends on his friends and his neighbours, I am sure the grain will not be reaped to-morrow."

Next day, she went out again, and left the same orders as before. The owner came, and waited. The sun grew hot, but nothing was done, for not a soul came. "You see," said the owner to his son, "these friends of ours are not to be depended upon; so run off at once to your uncles and cousins, and say I wish them to come early to-morrow morning and help us reap."

This the Young Ones, in a great fright, told also to their mother. "Do not fear, children," said she; "kindred and relations are not always very forward in helping one another; but keep your ears open, and let me know what you hear to-morrow."

The owner came the next day, and, finding his relations as backward as his neighbours, said to his son: "Now listen to me. Get two good sickles ready for to-morrow morning, for it seems we must reap the grain by ourselves." The Young Ones told this to their mother.

"Then, my dears," said she, "it is time for us to go; for when a man undertakes to do his work himself, it is not so likely that he will be disappointed." She took them away at once, and the grain was reaped the next day by the old man and his son

The Fox and the Stork

A Fox one day invited a Stork to dine with him, and, wishing to be amused at his guest's expense, put the soup which he had for dinner in a large flat dish, so that, while he himself could lap it up quite well, the Stork could only dip in the tip of his long bill.

Some time after, the Stork, bearing his treatment in mind, invited the Fox to take dinner with him. He, in his turn, put some minced meat in a long and narrow-necked vessel, into which he could easily put his bill, while Master Fox was forced to be content with licking what ran down the sides of the vessel.

The Fox then remembered his old trick, and could not but admit that the Stork had well paid him off. "I will not apologize for the dinner," said the Stork, "nor for the manner of serving it, for one ill turn deserves another."

The Gnat and the Bull

A STURDY Bull was once driven by the heat of the weather to wade up to his knees in a cool and swift-running stream. He had not been there long when a Gnat that had been disporting itself in the air pitched upon one of his horns.

"My dear fellow," said the Gnat, with as great a buzz as he could manage, "pray excuse the liberty I take. If I am too heavy only say so and I will go at once and rest upon the poplar which grows hard by the edge of the stream.

"Stay or go, it makes no matter to me," replied the Bull. "Had it not been for your buzz I should not even have known you were there."

The Deer and the Lion

One warm day a Deer went down to a brook to get a drink. The stream was smooth and clear, and he could see himself in the water. He looked at his horns and was very proud of them, for they were large and long and had many branches, but when he saw his feet he was ashamed to own them, they were so slim and small.

While he stood knee-deep in the water, and was thinking only of his fine horns, a Lion saw him and came leaping out from the tall grass to get him. The Deer would have been caught at once if he had not jumped quickly out of the brook. He ran as fast as he could, and his feet were so light and swift that he soon left the Lion far behind. But by and by he had to pass through some woods, and, as he was run-

ning, his horns were caught in some vines that grew among the trees. Before he could get loose the Lion was upon him.

"Ah me!" cried the Deer, "the things which pleased me most will now cause my death; while the things which I thought so mean and poor would have carried me safe out of danger."

The Fox and the Grapes

THERE was a time when a Fox would have ventured as far for a Bunch of Grapes as for a shoulder of mutton, and it was a Fox of those days and that palate that stood gaping under a vine and licking his lips at a most delicious Cluster of Grapes that he had spied out there.

He fetched a hundred and a hundred leaps at it, till, at last, when he was as weary as a dog, and found that there was no good to be done: "Hang 'em," says he, "they are as sour as crabs"; and so away he went, turning off the disappointment with a jest.

The Farmer and the Stork

A FARMER placed nets on his newly sown plough lands, and caught a quantity of Cranes, which came to pick up his seed. With them he trapped a Stork also.

The Stork, having his leg fractured by the net, earnestly besought the Farmer to spare his life. "Pray, save me, master," he said, "and let me go free this once. My broken limb should excite your pity. Besides, I am no Crane. I am a Stork, a bird of excellent character; and see how I love and slave for my father and mother. Look, too, at my feathers, they are not the least like to those of a Crane."

The Farmer laughed aloud, and said: "It may all be as you say, I only know this, I have taken you with those robbers, the Cranes, and you must die in their company."

The Hare and the Tortoise

The Hare, one day, laughing at the Tortoise for his slowness and general unwieldiness, was challenged by the latter to run a race. The Hare, looking on the whole affair as a great joke, consented, and the Fox was selected to act as umpire and hold the stakes.

The rivals started, and the Hare, of course, soon left the Tortoise far behind. Having come midway to the goal, she began to play about, nibble the young herbage, and amuse herself in many ways. The day being warm, she even thought she would take a little nap in a shady spot, as, if the Tortoise should pass her while

she slept, she could easily overtake him again before he reached the end.

The Tortoise meanwhile plodded on, unwavering and unresting, straight toward the goal.

The Hare, having overslept herself, started up from her nap, and was surprised to find that the Tortoise was nowhere in sight. Off she went at full speed, but on reaching the winning-post found that the Tortoise was already there, waiting for her arrival!

The Old Woman and the Doctor

An old Woman who had bad eyes called in a clever Doctor, who agreed for a certain sum to cure them. He was a very clever physician, but he was also a very great rogue; and when he called each day and bound up the Old Woman's eyes he took advantage of her blindness to carry away with him some article of her furniture. This went on until he pronounced his patient cured and her room was nearly bare.

He claimed his reward, but the Old Woman protested that, so far from being cured, her sight was worse than ever.

"We will soon see about that, my good dame," said he; and she was shortly after summoned to appear in court.

"May it please Your Honour," said she to the Judge, "before I called in this Doctor I could see a score of things in my room that now, when he says I am cured, I cannot see at all."

This opened the eyes of the court to the knavery of the Doctor, who was forced to give the Old Woman her property back again, and was not allowed to claim a penny of his fee.

The Boy and the Wolf

A MISCHIEVOUS Lad, who was set to mind some Sheep, often used, in jest, to cry "Wolf! Wolf!" and when the people at work in the neighbouring fields came running to the spot he would laugh at them for their pains.

One day the beast came in reality, and the Boy, this time, called "Wolf! Wolf!" in earnest; but the men, having been so often deceived, disregarded his cries, and he and his Sheep were left at the mercy of the Wolf.

The Blackamoor

A CERTAIN Man who had bought a Blackamoor said he was convinced that it was all nonsense about black being the natural colour of his skin. "He has been dirty in his habits," said he, "and neglected by his former masters. Bring me some hot water, soap, and scrubbing-

brushes, and a little sand, and we shall soon see what his colour is."

So he scrubbed, and his servants scrubbed till they were all tired. They made no difference in the colour of the Blackamoor; but the end of it all was that the poor fellow caught cold and died.

The Wolf in Sheep's Clothing

A Wolf, wrapping himself in the skin of a Sheep, by that means got admission into a sheepfold, where he devoured several of the young Lambs. The Shepherd, however, soon found him out and hung him up to a tree, still in his assumed disguise.

Some other Shepherds, passing that way, thought it was a sheep hanging and cried to their friend: "What, brother! is that the way you serve Sheep in this part of the country?"

"No, friends," cried he, giving at the same time the carcass a swing around, so that they might see what it was; "but it is the way to serve Wolves, even though they be dressed in Sheep's clothing."

The Two Travellers

As two men were travelling through a wood, one of them took up an axe which he saw lying

upon the ground. "Look here," said he to his companion, "I have found an axe."

"Don't say, 'I have found it,'" said the other, "but 'We have found it.' As we are companions, we ought to share it between us." The first would not agree to this idea, however.

They had not gone far when they heard the owner of the axe calling after them in a great passion. "We are in for it!" cried he who had the axe.

"Nay," answered the other, "say 'I'm in for it!'— not we. You would not let me share the prize, and I am not going to share the danger."

The Fox in the Well

An unlucky Fox, having fallen into a well, was able, by dint of great efforts, just to keep his head above water.

While he was struggling there and sticking his claws into the side of the Well, a Wolf came and looked in. "What! my dear brother," cried he, with affected concern, "can it really be you that I see down there? How cold you must feel! How long have you been in the water? How came you to fall in? I am so pained to see you. Do tell me all about it!"

"The end of a rope would be of more use to me than all your pity," answered the Fox.

"Just help me to get my foot on solid ground once more, and you shall have the whole story."

The Hen and the Fox

A Fox, having crept into an outhouse, looked up and down for something to eat, and at last espied a Hen sitting upon a perch so high that he could be no means come at her. He therefore had recourse to an old stratagem.

"Dear cousin," said he to her, "how do you do? I heard that you were ill and kept at home; I could not rest, therefore, till I had come to see you. Pray let me feel your pulse. Indeed, you do not look well at all."

He was running on in this impudent manner, when the Hen answered him from the roost: "Truly, dear Reynard, you are in the right. I was seldom in more danger than I am now. Pray excuse my coming down; I am sure I should catch my death."

The Fox, finding himself foiled by the Hen's cleverness, made off and tried his luck elsewhere.

The Ass and His Shadow

A Man, one hot day, hired an Ass, with his Driver, to carry some merchandise across a sandy plain. The sun's rays were overpowering, and unable to advance farther without a tem-

porary rest he called upon the Driver to stop, and proceeded to sit down in the shadow of the Ass.

The Driver, however, a lusty fellow, rudely pushed him away, and sat down on the spot himself.

"Nay, friend," said the Driver, "when you hired this Ass of me you said nothing about the shadow. If now you want that, too, you must pay for it."

The Ass in the Lion's Skin

An Ass, finding a Lion's skin, put it on, and ranged about the forest. The beasts fled in terror, and he was delighted at the success of his disguise. Meeting a Fox, he rushed upon him, and this time he tried to imitate as well the roaring of the Lion.

"Ah," said the Fox, "if you had held your tongue I should have been deceived like the rest; but now you bray I know who you are!"

The Wolf and the Sheep

A Wolf, sorely wounded and bitten by dogs, lay sick and maimed in his lair. Parched with thirst, he called to a Sheep who was passing and asked her to fetch some water from a stream flowing close by. "For," he said, "if you will

bring me drink, sister, I will find means to provide myself with meat."

"Yes," said the Sheep, "but if I should bring you the draught, you would doubtless make me provide the meat also."

Jupiter's Two Wallets

When Jupiter made Man, he gave him two Wallets; one for his neighbour's faults, the other for his own. He threw them over the Man's shoulder, so that one hung in front and the other behind.

The Man kept the one in front for his neighbour's faults, and the one behind for his own; so that, while the first was always under his nose, it took some pains to see the latter.

This custom, which began thus early, is not quite unknown at the present day.

The Satyr and the Traveller

A Satyr, ranging in the forest in winter, came across a Traveller, half starved with the cold. He took pity on him and invited him to go to his cave. On their way the Man kept blowing upon his fingers.

"Why do you do that?" said the Satyr, who had seen little of the world.

"To warm my hands, they are nearly frozen," replied the Man.

Arrived at the cave, the Satyr poured out a mess of smoking pottage and laid it before the Traveller, who at once commenced blowing at it with all his might.

"What, blowing again!" cried the Satyr. "Is it not hot enough?"

"Yes, faith," answered the Man, "it is hot enough in all conscience, and that is just the reason why I blow it."

"Be off with you!" cried the Satyr, in alarm; "I will have no part with a man who can blow hot and cold from the same mouth."

The Two Travellers and the Oyster

As TWO men were walking by the seaside at low water they saw an Oyster, and they both stooped at the same time to pick it up. Immediately, one pushed the other away, and a dispute ensued.

A third Traveller coming along at the time, they determined to refer the matter to him, as to which of the two had the better right to the Oyster.

While they were each telling his story the Arbitrator gravely took out his knife, opened the shell and loosened the Oyster.

When they had finished, and were listening for his decision, he just as gravely swallowed the Oyster, and offered them the two halves of the shell. "The Court," said he, "awards you each a Shell. The Oyster will cover the costs."

The Young Mouse, the Cock, and the Cat

A YOUNG MOUSE, on his return to his hole after leaving it for the first time, thus recounted his adventures to his mother: "Mother," said he, "quitting this narrow place where you have brought me up, I was rambling about to-day like a Young Mouse of spirit, who wished to see and to be seen, when two such notable creatures came in my way! One was so gracious, so gentle and benign; the other, who was just as noisy and forbidding, had on his head and under his chin pieces of raw meat, which shook at every step he took; and then, all at once, beating his sides with the utmost fury, he uttered such a harsh and piercing cry that I fled in terror; and this, too, just as I was about to introduce myself to the other stranger, who was covered with fur like our own, only richer looking and much more beautiful, and who seemed so modest and benevolent that it did my heart good to look at her."

"Ah, my son," replied the Old Mouse, "learn while you live to distrust appearances. The first strange creature was nothing but a Fowl, that will ere long be killed, and, when put on a dish in the pantry, we may make a delicious supper of his bones, while the other was a nasty, sly, and bloodthirsty hypocrite of a Cat, to whom no food is so welcome as a young and juicy Mouse like yourself."

The Wolf and the Mastiff

A Wolf, who was almost skin and bone, so well did the Dogs of the neighbourhood keep guard over their masters' property, met, one moonshiny night, a sleek Mastiff, who was, moreover, as strong as he was fat. The Wolf would gladly have supped off him, but saw that there would first be a great fight, for which, in his condition, he was not prepared; so, bidding the Dog good-evening very humbly, he praised his prosperous looks.

"It would be easy for you," replied the Mastiff, "to get as fat as I am if you liked. Quit this forest, where you and your fellows live so wretchedly, and often die with hunger. Follow me, and you will fare much better."

"What shall I have to do?" asked the Wolf.

"Almost nothing," answered the Dog; "only

chase away the beggars and fawn upon the folks of the house. You will, in return, be paid with all sorts of nice things — bones of fowls and pigeons — to say nothing of many a friendly pat on the head."

The Wolf, at the picture of so much comfort, nearly shed tears of joy. They trotted off together, but, as they went along, the Wolf noticed a bare spot on the Dog's neck.

"What is that mark?" said he. "Oh, nothing," said the Dog.

"How nothing?" urged the Wolf. "Oh, the merest trifle," answered the Dog; "the collar which I wear when I am tied up is the cause of it."

"Tied up!" exclaimed the Wolf, with a sudden stop; "tied up? Can you not always run where you please, then?"

"Well, not quite always," said the Mastiff; "but what can that matter?"

"It matters so much to me," rejoined the Wolf, "that your lot shall not be mine at any price"; and, leaping away, he ran once more to his native forest.

The Tail of the Serpent

The Tail of a Serpent once rebelled against the Head, and said that it was a great shame that one end of any animal should always have its

way, and drag the other after it, whether it was willing or no. It was in vain that the Head urged that the Tail had neither brains nor eyes, and that it was in no way made to lead.

Wearied by the Tail's importunity, the Head one day let him have his will. The Serpent now went backward for a long time quite gayly, until he came to the edge of a high cliff, over which both Head and Tail went flying, and came with a heavy thump on the shore beneath.

The Head, it may be supposed, was never again troubled by the Tail with a word about leading.

The Falcon and the Capon

A Capon, who had strong reasons for thinking that the time of his sacrifice was near at hand, carefully avoided coming into close quarters with any of the farm servants or domestics of the estate on which he lived. A glimpse that he had once caught of the kitchen, with its blazing fire, and the head cook, like an executioner, with a formidable knife chopping off the heads of some of his companions, had been sufficient to keep him ever after in dread.

Hence, one day when he was wanted for roasting, all calling, clucking, and coaxing of the cook's assistants were in vain.

"How deaf and dull you must be," said a Falcon to the Capon, "not to hear when you are called, or to see when you are wanted! You should take pattern by me. I never let my master call me twice."

"Ah," answered the Capon, "if Falcons were called like Capons, to be run upon a spit and set before the kitchen fire, they would be just as slow to come and just as hard of hearing as I am now."

The Crow and the Pitcher

A Crow, ready to die with thirst, flew with joy to a Pitcher, hoping to find some water in it.

He found some there, to be sure, but only a little drop at the bottom which he was quite unable to reach.

He then tried to overturn the Pitcher, but it was too heavy. So he gathered up some pebbles, with which the ground near was covered and, taking them one by one in his beak, dropped them into the Pitcher.

By this means the water gradually reached the top, and he was enabled to drink at his ease.

The Eagle and the Owl

The Eagle and the Owl, after many quarrels, swore that they would be fast friends forever,

and that they would never harm each other's children.

"But do you know my little ones?" said the Owl. "If you do not, I fear it will go hard with them when you find them."

"Nay, then, I do not," replied the Eagle.

"The greater your loss," said the Owl; "They are the sweetest prettiest things in the world. Such bright eyes! such charming plumage! such winning little ways! You'll know them now from my description."

A short time after the Eagle found the owlets in a hollow tree.

"These hideous little staring frights, at any rate, cannot be neighbour Owl's delicious pets," said the Eagle; "so I may make away with them without the least misgiving."

The Owl, finding her young ones gone, loaded the Eagle with reproaches.

"Nay," answered the Eagle, "blame yourself rather than me. If you paint with such flattering colours, it is not my fault if I do not recognize your portraits."

The Buffoon and the Countryman

On the occasion of some festivities that were given by a Roman nobleman, a Merry-Andrew of a fellow caused much laughter by his tricks

upon the stage, and, more than all, by his imitation of the squeaking of a Pig, which seemed to the hearers so real that they called for it again and again.

A Countryman, however, in the audience, thought the imitation was not perfect; and he made his way to the stage and said that, if he were permitted, he to-morrow would enter the lists and squeak against the Merry-Andrew for a wager.

The mob, anticipating great fun, shouted their consent, and accordingly, when the next day came, the two rival jokers were in their places.

The hero of the previous day went first, and the hearers, more pleased than ever, fairly roared with delight.

Then came the turn of the Countryman, who having a Pig carefully concealed under his cloak, so that no one would have suspected its existence, vigorously pinched its ear with his thumb-nail, and made it squeak with a vengeance.

"Not half as good — not half as good!" cried the audience, and many among them even began to hiss.

"Fine judges you!" replied the Countryman, rushing to the front of the stage, drawing the Pig from under his cloak, and holding the

animal up on high. "Behold the performer that you condemn!"

The Old Man, His Son, and the Ass

An old Man and his Little Boy were once driving an Ass before them to the next market-town, where it was to be sold.

"Have you no more wit," said a passerby, "than for you and your Son to trudge on foot and let your Ass go light?" So the Man put his Boy on the Ass, and they went on again.

"You lazy young rascal!" cried the next person they met; "are you not ashamed to ride and let your poor old Father go on foot?" The Man then lifted off the Boy and got up himself.

Two women passed soon after, and one said to the other, "Look at that selfish old fellow, riding along while his little Son follows after on foot!" The Old Man thereupon took up the Boy behind him.

The next traveller they met asked the Old Man whether or not the Ass was his own. Being answered that it was: "No one would think so," said he, "from the way in which you use it. Why, you are better able to carry the poor animal than he is to carry both of you."

So the Old Man tied the Ass's legs to a long pole, and he and his Son shouldered the pole

and staggered along under the weight. In that fashion they entered the town, and their appearance caused so much laughter that the Old Man, mad with vexation at the result of his endeavours to give satisfaction to everybody, threw the Ass into the river and seizing his Son by the arm went his way home again.

The Lion, the Bear, the Monkey, and the Fox

The Tyrant of the Forest issued a proclamation commanding all his subjects to repair immediately to his royal den.

Among the rest, the Bear made his appearance, but pretending to be offended with the odour which issued from the Monarch's apartments, he was imprudent enough to hold his nose in his Majesty's presence.

This insolence was so highly resented that the Lion in a rage laid him dead at his feet.

The Monkey, observing what had passed, trembled for his skin, and attempted to conciliate favour by the most abject flattery. He began with protesting that, for his part, he thought the apartments were perfumed with Arabian spices; and, exclaiming against the rudeness of the Bear, admired the beauty of his Majesty's paws, so happily formed, he said, to correct the insolence of clowns.

This adulation, instead of being received as he expected, proved no less offensive than the rudeness of the Bear, and the courtly Monkey was in like manner extended by the side of Sir Bruin.

And now his Majesty cast his eye upon the Fox.

"Well, Reynard," said he, "and what scent do you discover here?"

"Great Prince," replied the cautious Fox, "my nose was never esteemed my most distinguishing sense; and at present I would by no means venture to give my opinion, as I have unfortunately caught a terrible cold."

The Wolf and the Lamb

A FLOCK of Sheep was feeding in the meadow while the Dogs were asleep, and the Shepherd at a distance playing on his pipe beneath the shade of a spreading elm.

A young, inexperienced Lamb, observing a half-starved Wolf peering through the pales of the fence, began to talk with him.

"Pray, what are you seeking for here?" said the Lamb.

"I am looking," replied the Wolf, "for some tender grass; for nothing, you know, is more pleasant than to feed in a fresh pasture, and to

slake one's thirst at a crystal stream, both which I perceive you enjoy within these pales in their utmost perfection. Happy creature," continued he, "how much I envy you who have everything which I desire, for philosophy has long taught me to be satisfied with a little!"

"It seems, then," returned the Lamb, "those who say you feed on flesh accuse you falsely, since a little grass will easily content you. If this be true, let us for the future live like brethren, and feed together." So saying, the simple Lamb crept through the fence, and at once became a prey to the pretended philosopher, and a sacrifice to his own inexperience and credulity.

The Chameleon

Two Travellers happened on their journey to be engaged in a warm dispute about the colour of the Chameleon. One of them affirmed that it was blue and that he had seen it with his own eyes upon the naked branch of a tree, feeding in the air on a very clear day.

The other strongly asserted it was green, and that he had viewed it very closely and minutely upon the broad leaf of a fig-tree.

Both of them were positive, and the dispute was rising to a quarrel; but a third person luckily

coming by, they agreed to refer the question to his decision.

"Gentlemen," said the Arbitrator, with a smile of great self-satisfaction, "you could not have been more lucky in your reference, as I happen to have caught one of them last night; but, indeed, you are both mistaken, for the creature is totally black."

"Black, impossible!" cried both the disputants!"

"Nay," quoth the Umpire, with great assurance, "the matter may be soon decided, for I immediately inclosed my Chameleon in a little paper box, and here it is." So saying, he drew it out of his pocket, opened his box, and, lo! it was as white as snow.

The Travellers looked equally surprised and equally confounded; while the sagacious reptile, assuming the air of a philosopher, thus admonished them: "Ye children of men, learn diffidence and moderation in your opinions. 'Tis true, you happen in this present instance to be all in the right, and have only considered the subject under different circumstances, but, pray, for the future allow others to have eyesight as well as yourselves; nor wonder if every one prefers to accept the testimony of his own senses."

The Eagle, the Jackdaw, and the Magpie

THE kingly Eagle kept his court with all the formalities of sovereign state, and was duly attended by all his plumed subjects in their highest feathers.

These solemn assemblies, however, were frequently disturbed by the impertinent conduct of two, who assumed the importance of high-fliers; these were no other than the Jackdaw and the Magpie, who were forever contending for precedence which neither of them would give up to the other.

The contest ran so high that at length they mutually agreed to appeal to the sovereign Eagle for his decision in this momentous affair.

The Eagle gravely answered that he did not wish to make an invidious distinction by deciding to the advantage of either party, but would give them a rule by which they might determine between themselves; "for," added he, "the greater fool of the two shall in future always take precedence, but which of you it may be, yourselves must settle."

The Boy and the Filberts

A BOY once thrust his hand into a pitcher which was full of figs and filberts.

He grasped as many as his fist could possibly hold, but when he tried to draw it out the narrowness of the neck prevented him.

Not liking to lose any of them, but unwilling to draw out his hand, he burst into tears and bitterly bemoaned his hard fortune.

An honest fellow who stood by gave him this wise and reasonable advice: "Take only half as many, my boy, and you will easily get them."

The Passenger and the Pilot

In a violent storm at sea, the whole crew of a vessel was in imminent danger of shipwreck.

After the rolling of the waves was somewhat abated, a certain Passenger, who had never been at sea before, observing the Pilot to have appeared wholly unconcerned, even in their greatest danger, had the curiosity to ask him what death his father died.

"What death?" said the Pilot, "Why, he perished at sea, as my grandfather did before him."

"And are you not afraid of trusting yourself to an element that has proved thus fatal to your family?"

"Afraid? By no means; why, we must all die; is not your father dead?"

"Yes, but he died in his bed."

"And why, then, are you not afraid of trusting yourself to your bed?"

"Because I am perfectly secure there."

"It may be so," replied the Pilot; "but if the hand of Providence is equally extended over all places, there is no more reason for me to be afraid of going to sea than for you to be afraid of going to bed."

The Dog and the Crocodile

A Dog, running along the banks of the Nile, grew thirsty, but fearing to be seized by the monsters of that river, he would not stop to satiate his drought, but lapped as he ran.

A Crocodile, raising his head above the surface of the water, asked him why he was in such a hurry. He had often, he said, wished for his acquaintance, and should be glad to embrace the present opportunity.

"You do me great honour," said the Dog, "but it is to avoid such companions as you that I am in so much haste!"

A Matter of Arbitration

Two Cats, having stolen some cheese, could not agree about dividing the prize. In order,

therefore, to settle the dispute, they consented to refer the matter to a Monkey.

The proposed Arbitrator very readily accepted the office, and, producing a balance, put a part into each scale. "Let me see," said he, "aye — this lump outweighs the other"; and immediately bit off a considerable piece in order to reduce it, he observed, to an equilibrium. The opposite scale was now heavier, which afforded our conscientious judge a reason for a second mouthful.

"Hold, hold," said the two Cats, who began to be alarmed for the event, "give us our shares and we are satisfied." "If you are satisfied," returned the Monkey, "justice is not; a cause of this intricate nature is by no means so soon determined." Upon which he continued to nibble first one piece then the other, till the poor Cats, seeing their cheese rapidly diminishing, entreated to give himself no further trouble, but to deliver to them what remained.

"Not so fast, I beseech ye, friends," replied the Monkey; "we owe justice to ourselves as well as to you. What remains is due to me in right of my office."

Thus saying, he crammed the whole into his mouth, and with great gravity dismissed the court.

The Crow and the Mussel

A CROW having found a Mussel on the sea-shore; took it in his beak and tried for a long time to break the shell by hammering it upon a stone.

Another Crow — a sly old fellow — came and watched him for some time in silence.

"Friend," said he at last, "you'll never break it in that way. Listen to me. This is the way to do it: Fly up as high as you can, and let the tiresome thing fall upon a rock. It will be smashed then sure enough, and you can eat it at your leisure."

The simple-minded and unsuspecting Crow did as he was told, flew up and let the Mussel fall.

Before he could descend to eat it, however, the other bird had pounced upon it and carried it away.

The Ass and His Purchaser

A MAN wished to purchase an Ass, and agreed with his owner that he should try him before he bought him. He took the Ass home, and put him in the straw-yard with his other asses, upon which the beast left all the others and joined himself at once to the most idle and the greatest eater of them all.

The Man put a halter on him, and led him back to his owner: and when he was asked how, in so short a time, he could have made a trial of him, "I do not need," he answered, "a trial; I know that he will be just such another as the one whom of all the rest he chose for his companion."

A Country Fellow and the River

A STUPID Boy, who was sent to market by the good old woman, his Mother, to sell butter and cheese, made a stop by the way at a swift river, and laid himself down on the bank there, until it should run out.

About midnight, home he went to his Mother, with all his market trade back again.

"Why, how now, my Son?" said she. "What ill fortune have you had, that you have sold nothing all day?"

"Why, Mother, yonder is a river that has been running all this day, and I stayed till just now, waiting for it to run out; and there it is, running still."

"My Son," said the good woman, "thy head and mine will be laid in the grave many a day before this river has all run by. You will never sell your butter and cheese if you wait for that."

The Playful Ass

An Ass climbed up to the roof of a building and, frisking about there, broke in the tiling. His Master went up after him, and quickly drove him down, beating him severely with a thick wooden cudgel.

The Ass then cried out in astonishment, "Why, I saw the monkey do this very thing yesterday, and you all laughed heartily, as if it afforded you great amusement!"

The Boys and the Frogs

Some idle boys, playing near a pond, saw a number of Frogs in the water, and began to pelt them with stones. They had killed several of them, when one of the Frogs, lifting his head out of the water, cried out: "Pray stop, my Boys: you forget that what is sport to you is death to us!"

The Camel and His Master

One night a Camel looked into the tent where his Master was lying and said: "Kind Master, will you not let me put my head inside of the door? The wind blows very cold to-night."

"Oh, yes," said the Man. "There is plenty of room."

So the Camel moved forward and stretched his head into the tent. "Ah!" he said, "this is what I call comfort."

In a little while he called to his Master again. "Now if I could only warm my neck also," he said.

"Then put your neck inside," said his Master, kindly. "You will not be in my way."

The Camel did so, and for a time was very well contented. Then, looking around, he said: "If I could only put my forelegs inside I should feel a great deal better."

His Master moved a little and said: "You may put your forelegs and shoulders inside, for I know that the wind blows cold to-night."

The Camel had hardly planted his forefeet within the tent when he spoke again:

"Master," he said, "I keep the tent open by standing here. I think I ought to go wholly within."

"Yes, come in," said the Man. "There is hardly room for us both, but I do not want to keep you out in the cold."

So the Camel crowded into the tent, but he was no sooner inside than he said: "You were right when you said that there was hardly

room for us both. I think it would be better for you to stand outside and so give me a chance to turn around and lie down."

Then, without more ado, he rudely pushed the Man out at the door, and took the whole tent for himself.

The Flies and the Honey-pot

A JAR of Honey having been upset in a housekeeper's room, a number of Flies were attracted by its sweetness, and placing their feet in it ate it greedily.

Their feet, however, became so smeared with the Honey that they could not use their wings, nor release themselves, and so were suffocated.

Just as they were expiring, they exclaimed, "O foolish creatures that we are; for the sake of a little pleasure we have destroyed ourselves!"

The Spectacles

JUPITER, one day, enjoying himself over a bowl of nectar, and in a merry humour, determined to make mankind a present.

Momus was appointed to convey it, who, mounted on a rapid car, was presently on earth. "Come hither," said he, "ye happy mortals; great Jupiter has opened for your benefit his

all-gracious hands. 'Tis true he made you somewhat short-sighted, but, to remedy that inconvenience, behold now he has favoured you!"

So saying, he opened his portmanteau, when an infinite number of spectacles tumbled out, and were picked up by the crowd with all the eagerness imaginable. There were enough for all, for every man had his pair.

But it was soon found that these spectacles did not represent objects to all mankind alike; for one pair was purple, another blue; one was white and another black; some of the glasses were red, some green, and some yellow. In short, there were all manner of colours, and every shade of colour. However, notwithstanding this diversity, every man was charmed with his own, as believing it the best, and enjoyed in opinion all the satisfaction of truth.

The Bear and the Fowls

A Bear, who was bred in the savage desert, wished to see the world, and he travelled from forest to forest, and from one kingdom to another, making many profound observations on his way.

One day he came by accident into a farmer's yard, where he saw a number of Fowls standing

to drink by the side of a pool. Observing that after every sip they turned up their heads toward the sky, he could not forbear inquiring the reason of so peculiar a ceremony.

They told him that it was by way of returning thanks to Heaven for the benefits they received; and was indeed an ancient and religious custom, which they could not, with a safe conscience, or without impiety, omit.

Here the Bear burst into a fit of laughter, at once mimicking their gestures, and ridiculing their superstition, in a most contemptuous manner.

On this the Cock, with a spirit suitable to the boldness of his character, addressed him in the following words: "As you are a stranger, sir, you may perhaps be excused for the indecency of your behaviour; yet give me leave to tell you that none but a Bear would ridicule any religious ceremonies in the presence of those who believe them of importance."

THE FABLES OF BIDPAI

"In English now they teach us wit. In English now they say:
Ye men, come learn of beasts to live, to rule and to obey,
To guide you wisely in the world, to know to shun deceit,
To fly the crooked paths of guile, to keep your doings straight."

SIR THOMAS NORTH

THE FABLES OF BIDPAI

The Snake and the Sparrows

IT IS related that two Sparrows once made their nest in the roof of a house; and, contenting themselves with a single grain, so lived. Once on a time they had young ones, and both the mother and father used to go out in search of food for their support; and what they procured they made up into grains and dropped into their crops.

One day, the male Sparrow had gone out somewhere. When he came back he beheld the female Sparrow fluttering in the greatest distress around the nest, while she uttered piteous cries. He exclaimed, "Sweet friend! what movements are these which I behold in thee?" She replied, "How shall I not lament, since, when I returned after a moment's absence, I saw a huge Snake come and prepare to devour my offspring, though I poured forth piteous cries. It was all in vain, for the Snake said, 'Thy sigh will have no effect on my dark-mirrored scales.' I replied, 'Dread this, that

I and the father of these children will gird up the waist of vengeance, and will exert ourselves to the utmost for thy destruction.' The Snake laughed on hearing me, and that cruel oppressor has devoured my young and has also taken his rest in the nest."

When the male Sparrow heard this story, his frame was wrung with anguish; and the fire of regret for the loss of his offspring fell on his soul. At that moment the master of the house was engaged in lighting his lamp; and holding in his hand a match, dipped in grease and lighted, was about to put it into the lamp-holder. The Sparrow flew and snatched the match from his hand and threw it into the nest. The master of the house, through fear that the fire would catch to the roof, and that the consequences would be most pernicious, immediately ran up on the terrace and began clearing away the nest from beneath, in order to put out the fire. The Snake beheld in front the danger of the fire, and heard above the sound of the pickaxe. It put out its head from a hole which it had near the roof, and no sooner did it do so than it received a blow of death from the pickaxe.

And the moral of this fable is, that the Snake despised its enemy, and made no account of

him, until in the end that enemy pounded his head with the stone of vengeance.

The Geese and the Tortoise

It is related that in a pool whose pure water reflected every image like a clear mirror, once resided two Geese and a Tortoise, and in consequence of their being neighbours, the thread of their circumstances had been drawn out into sincere friendship, and they passed their lives contentedly.

In that water which was the source of their life and the support of their existence, however, a complete failure began to manifest itself, and a glaring alteration became evident. When the Geese perceived that state of things they withdrew their hearts from the home to which they were accustomed and determined on emigrating. Therefore with hearts full of sorrow and eyes full of tears, they approached the Tortoise, and introduced the subject of parting.

The Tortoise wept at the intelligence and piteously exclaimed, "What words are these, and how can existence be supported without sympathizing friends? And since that I have not power even to take leave, how can I endure the load of separation?"

The Geese replied: "Our hearts, too, are wounded by the sharp points of absence, but the distress of being without water is impossible to endure, and therefore of necessity we are about to forsake our friend and country."

The Tortoise rejoined: "O friends! ye know that the distress of the want of water affects me more, and that without water I cannot support myself. At this crisis the rights of ancient companionship demand that ye should take me with you, and not leave me alone in the sorrowful abode of separation."

The Geese answered: "O esteemed comrade! the pang of parting from thee is sharper than that of exile, and wherever we go, though we should pass our time in the utmost comfort, yet, deprived of seeing thee, the eye of our rejoicing would be darkened; but for us to proceed on the earth's surface and so to traverse a great and long distance is impossible, and for thee, too, to fly through the expanse of air and accompany us is impracticable; and such being the case, how can we travel together?"

The Tortoise answered: "Your sagacity will be able to devise a remedy for this matter, and what plan can develop while my spirit is broken by the thought of parting?"

The Geese replied: "O friend! during this

period of our friendship we have observed in thee somewhat of hastiness and rashness; perhaps thou wilt not act upon what we say, nor keep firm to thy promise after thou hast made it."

The Tortoise rejoined: "How can it be that ye should speak with a view to my advantage, and I fail to perform a compact which is for my own good?"

Said the Geese: "The condition is that when we take thee up and fly through the air thou wilt not utter a single syllable, for any one who may happen to see us will be sure to throw in a word, and say something in reference to us directly or indirectly. Now, how many soever allusions thou mayest hear, or whatever manœuvres thou mayest observe, thou must close the path of reply, and not loose thy tongue."

The Tortoise answered: "I am obedient to your commands, and I will positively place the seal of silence on my lips, so that I shall not be even disposed to answer any creature."

The Geese then brought a stick, and the Tortoise laid hold of the middle of it firmly with his teeth, and they, lifting the two ends of the stick, bore him up. When they got to a height in the air, they happened to pass over a village, and the inhabitants thereof having discovered

them, were astonished at their proceedings, and came out to look at the sight, and raised a shout from left and right, "Look! how two geese are carrying a tortoise!"

And as in those days the like of it had never been witnessed by that people, their cries and exclamations increased every moment. The Tortoise was silent for a time, but at length the cauldron of his self-esteem began to boil, and his patience being exhausted, he exclaimed: "You who are shouting to others to look at what is plain enough to every one, hold your peace!" No sooner had he opened his lips, however, than he fell from on high, and the Geese exclaimed, "It is the part of friends to give advice and of the well-disposed to listen to it."

And the moral of this story is, that whoever listens not to the admonition of friends, with the hearing of acceptance, will have hastened his own destruction.

The Sagacious Snake

It is related that the infirmities of age had taken effect upon a Snake and through loss of strength he was unable to pursue his prey, and was bewildered in his proceedings how to obtain food. Life was impossible without food, and to hunt for it, had, through his weakness, become

impracticable. Accordingly he thus reflected: "Alas! for the strength of my youth; and now to expect its return and to hope for the recurrence of my animal vigour is a thing of the same complexion as to light a fire from water." He felt that what was passed could not be recalled, and he therefore busied himself with taking thought for the future, and said: "In lieu of the strength of youth I have a little experience which I have acquired, and a trifle of prudence. I must now base my proceedings on abstaining from injuring others and must begin to consider how I may obtain, for the remainder of my life, what may be the means of support."

He then went to the brink of a spring of water in which there were a number of frogs who had a potent King and one who was obeyed and renowned. The Snake cast himself down there in the dust of the road, like to a sufferer on whom calamity has fallen. A Frog speedily made up to him, and asked him: "I see thou art very sorrowful. What is the cause of it?" The Snake replied: "Who deserves more to grieve than I, whose maintenance was from hunting frogs? Today an event has occurred which has rendered the pursuit of them unlawful to me, and if I seriously designed to seize one,

I could not." The Frog went away and told the King, who was amazed at this strange circumstance, and coming to the Snake, asked him: "What is the cause of this accident that has befallen thee and what act has brought down this upon thee?"

The Snake replied: "O King, greed plunged me into calamity, and this befell as follows: One day I attempted to seize a Frog, which fled from me and took refuge in the house of a holy man. My appetite led me to follow him into the house, which happened to be dark. The son of the holy man lay there asleep, and his great toe coming against me I fancied it was the Frog. From the ardour of my greediness I closed my teeth upon it, and the child died on the spot. The holy man discovered the fact, and from regret for his son, attacked me, and I, turning toward the open country, fled with speed, and the recluse pursued me and cursed me, and said: 'I desire of my Creator that He will make thee base and powerless, and cause thee to be the vehicle of the Frog-king. And, verily, thou shalt not have power to eat Frogs, save what their King shall bestow on thee as alms.' And now, of necessity, I have come hither that the King may ride upon me, and I have acquiesced in the will of God."

The matter pleased the King of the Frogs, and he thought that it would redound to his advantage; and he at once seated himself upon the Snake, and indulged in vainglorious airs in consequence.

Some time passed in this way. At last the Snake said: "May the life of the King be prolonged! I cannot do without food and sustenance, that I may support life thereon and fulfil this service." The King said: "The case is as thou sayest; I cannot do without my steed, and my steed cannot have strength without food." He then fixed two Frogs as his daily allowance, that he might use as his regular supply for breakfast and dinner. The Snake maintained himself on that allowance; and inasmuch as the attention he paid to the Frog-king involved a benefit to himself he did not find fault with it.

And this story is adduced to make it apparent that courtesy and humility are readier means to uproot an enemy than war and contest.

The Old Woman's Cat

In former times there lived an old woman in a state of extreme debility. She possessed a cot more narrow than the heart of the ignorant and darker than the miser's grave; and a Cat

was her companion, which had never seen, even in the mirror of imagination, the face of a loaf, nor had heard from friend or stranger the name of meat. It was content if occasionally it smelt the odour of a mouse from its hole, or saw the print of the foot of one on the surface of a board, and if, on some rare occasion, by the aid of good fortune one fell into its claws, it subsisted a whole week, more or less, on that amount of food.

And, inasmuch as the house of the old woman was the famine-year of that Cat, it was always miserable and thin, and from a distance appeared like an idea.

One day, through excessive weakness, it had, with the utmost difficulty, mounted on the top of the roof; thence it beheld a Cat which walked proudly on the wall of a neighbouring house, and after the fashion of a destroying lion advanced with measured steps, and from excessive fat lifted its feet slowly. When the Cat of the old woman saw this, it was astonished and cried out, saying: "Thou, whose state is thus pleasant, whence art thou? and since it appears that thou comest from the banquet-chamber of the Khan of Khata, whence is this sleekness of thine, and from what cause this thy grandeur and strength?"

The Neighbour-Cat replied: "I am the crumb-eater of the tray of the Sultan. Every morning I attend on the court of the king, and when they spread the tray of invitation, I display boldness and daring, and in general I snatch off some morsels of fat meats, and of loaves made of the finest flour; and thus I pass my time happy and satisfied till the next day."

The Cat of the old woman inquired: "What sort of a thing may fat meat be? and what kind of relish has bread, made of fine flour? I, during my whole life, have never seen nor tasted aught save the old woman's broths, and mouse's flesh."

The Neighbour-Cat laughed, and said: "Therefore it is that one cannot distinguish thee from a spider, and this form and appearance that thou hast is a reproach to our whole race. If thou shouldst see the court of the Sultan and smell the odour of those delicious viands, thou wouldst acquire a fresh form."

The Cat of the old woman, said, most beseechingly, "O brother! thou art bound to me by neighbourship and kinship; why not this time, when thou goest, take me with thee? Perchance, by thy good fortune, I may obtain food."

The heart of the Neighbour-Cat melted at

the speaker's lamentable position, and he resolved that he would not attend the feast without him. The Cat of the old woman felt new life at these tidings, and descending from the roof stated the case to his mistress. The old dame began to advise the Cat, saying: "O kind companion, be not deceived by the words of worldly people and abandon not the corner of content, for the vessel of covetousness is not filled save with the dust of the grave." But the Cat had taken into its head such a longing for the delicacies of the Sultan's table that the medicine of advice was not profitable to it.

In short, the next day, along with its neighbour, the old woman's Cat, with tottering steps conveyed itself to court, but before it could arrive there ill-fortune had poured the water of disappointment on the fire of its wish, and the reason was as follows:

The day before, the cats had made a general onslaught on the table, and raised an uproar beyond bounds, and annoyed, to the last degree, the guests and their host. Wherefore, on this day, the Sultan had commanded that a band of archers, standing in ambush, should watch, so that for every cat who, holding before its face the buckler of impudence should enter the

plain of audacity, the very first morsel that it ate should be a liver-piercing shaft.

The old woman's Cat, ignorant of this circumstance, as soon as it smelt the odour of the viands, turned its face like a falcon to the hunting-ground of the table, and the scale of the balance of appetite had not yet been weighted by heavy mouthfuls, when the heart-piercing arrow quivered in its breast.

> Dear friend! the honey pays not for the sting,
> Content with syrup is a better thing.

The Young Tiger

In the environs of Basrah there was an island of excessively pleasant climate, where limpid waters flowed on every side and life-bestowing zephyrs breathed around.

From its excessive exquisiteness they called it the "Joy-expanding Wilderness," and a Tiger bore sway there, such that from dread of him fierce lions could not set foot in that retreat.

He had lived much time in that wild, according to his wish, and had never seen the form of disappointment in the mirror of existence. He had a young one whose countenance made the world seem bright to him, and his intention was that when that young one came to years

he would commit that solitude to his charge, and pass the rest of his life at ease in the corner of retirement. The blossom of his wish had not yet expanded on the stem of desire when the autumn of death gave the fruit of the garden of his existence to the mind of destruction.

And when this Tiger was seized by the claw of the Lion, Death, several wild beasts who for a long time entertained a desire for that wilderness made a unanimous movement and set about appropriating it. The young Tiger saw that he possessed not the strength to resist. He went voluntarily into exile, and amongst the wild beasts a huge contest arose. A blood-spilling Lion overcame all the others and brought the island into his own possession, and the young Tiger, having for some time endured distress in the mountains and wastes, conveyed himself to another haunt, and disclosed his affliction to the wild beasts of that district, asking their aid to find a remedy.

They, having received intelligence of the victory of the Lion, and his overpowering might, said: "O unfortunate! thy place is now in the possession of a Lion such that from terror of him the wild birds will not fly over that wilderness, and from fear of him the elephant will not approach. We have not strength to fight

with him and thou too art not able to enter with him the arena of strife. Our opinion demands that thou shouldst betake thyself to his court, and with perfect loyalty enter his service."

These words seemed reasonable to the young Tiger, and he looked upon his best course to be this — that he should voluntarily enter the service of the Lion, and, to the extent of his ability, offer the duties of attendance. Through the intervention of one of the nobles he obtained the honour of waiting on the Lion, and, having become the object of the imperial regard, was appointed to an office suited to his spirit. Having tightly fastened the belt of obedience on the waist of affection the royal favour was constantly augmented and he incessantly displayed increased exertion in the affairs of the state.

Upon a certain time an important matter arose which called the Lion away to a distant jungle; and at that time the heat of the oven of the sky was unmitigated, and the expanse of waste and mountain like a furnace of glass fiercely inflamed. From the excessive heat of the air, the brains of animals were boiled in their craniums, and the crabs in the water were fried like fish in the frying-pan.

The Lion reflected: "At such a time, when the shell at the bottom of the deep, like a fowl on a spit, is roasting, an affair of this importance has occurred. Who may there be among my attendants who would not be affected by the labour and who, undeterred by the heat of the atmosphere, would approach this undertaking?"

In the midst of this reflection the Tiger came in with the line of attendants and observed that the Lion was thoughtful. On the ground of his tact and affection, he advanced near the throne of royalty, and was emboldened to ask the cause of that thoughtfulness, and having learned how the case stood, he took upon himself to accomplish the matter, and having been honoured with permission, he set off with a body of attendants, and, arriving at that place at noon, he betook himself to the accomplishment of that affair, and the instant that the business was settled to his satisfaction he changed his reins to return.

The officers who had been appointed to attend him unanimously represented as follows: "In such heat as this, all this distance has been traversed by the steps of completion, and now that the affair has been settled and the confidence placed in you by his majesty been

demonstrated, it will certainly be advisable if you should repose a short time in the shade of a tree and allay the fiery tongue of thirst by drinking cool water."

The Tiger smiled and said: "My intimacy and rank with his majesty the king is a banner that I have by toil and effort set up. It would not be well to level it with the ground by indulgence and sloth. Without supporting trouble it is impossible to arrive at the carrying off of treasure, and unaccompanied by the thorn we cannot reap the enjoyment of the rose garden."

The informers furnished intelligence of this to the Lion, and recited the book of the affair, from preface to conclusion. The Lion nodded the head of approval, and said: "The people may be at peace in the just reign of that ruler who does not place his head on the pillow of repose." He then sent for the Tiger, and having distinguished him with special honours, committed that jungle to him, and, having bestowed on him the place of his sire, conferred on him, in addition, the dignity of being his heir.

And the use of this fable is, that thou mayest learn that to no one does the sun of his wish rise from the eastern quarter of hope without the diligent use of great exertion.

The Fox and the Drum

It is related that a Fox was once prowling over a moor, and was roaming in every direction in hope of scenting food. Presently he came to the foot of a tree, at the side of which they had suspended a drum, and whenever a gust of wind came, a branch of the tree was put in motion, and struck the surface of the drum, when a terrible noise arose from it.

The Fox, seeing a domestic fowl under the tree, who was pecking the ground with her beak, and searching for food, planted himself in ambush, and wished to make her his prey, when all of a sudden the sound of a drum reached his ear. He looked and saw a very fat form, and a prodigious sound from it reached his hearing. The appetite of the Fox was excited, and he thought to himself, "Assuredly its flesh and skin will be proportioned to its voice."

He issued from his lurking-place and turned toward the tree. The fowl being put on its guard by that circumstance, fled, and the Fox, by a hundred exertions, ascended the tree. Much did he labour till he had torn the drum, and then he found nought save a skin and a piece of wood. The fire of regret descended into his heart, and the water of contrition began to

run from his eyes, and he said: "Alas! that by reason of this huge bulk which is all wind, that lawful prey has escaped from my hand, and from this empty form no advantage has resulted to me."

Loudly ever sounds the tabour,
But in vain — within is nought:
Art thou wise, for substance labour,
Semblance will avail thee nought.

The Sparrows and the Falcon

Two Sparrows once fixed their nest on the branch of a tree; and of worldly gear, water and grain sufficed them; while on the summit of a mountain, beneath which that tree lay, a Falcon had its abode, which, at the time of stooping on its quarry, issued from its lurking-place like lightning, and, like heaven's bolt, clean consumed the feebler birds.

Whenever the Sparrows produced young, and the time was near at hand for them to fly, that Falcon, rushing forth from its ambush, used to carry them off and make them food for its own young. Now, to those Sparrows — in accordance with the saying, "The law of home is a part of faith" — to migrate from that place was impossible, and yet from the cruelty of the tyrannous Hawk it was difficult to reside there.

On one occasion their young ones, having gained strength and put forth feathers and wings, were able to move; and the father and mother, pleased with the sight of their offspring, testified their joy at their attempt to fly.

Suddenly the thought of the Falcon passed through their minds, and, all at once, they began to lament from anxiety.

One of their children — in whose countenance the signs of ripe discretion were visible — having inquired the reason of their despondency, they recounted the history of the Falcon's oppression and of its carrying off their young, with all the particulars.

The son said; "The Causer of Causes has sent a cure for every sorrow. It is probable that if ye exert yourselves in repelling this misfortune both this calamity will be averted from our heads and this burden removed from your hearts."

These words pleased the Sparrows; and while one of them stopped to attend the young ones, the other flew forth in search of relief. He resolved in his mind on the way that he would tell his story to whatsoever animal his eyes first fell upon, and ask a remedy for his heart's distress from it.

It happened that a Salamander, having come

forth from a mine of fire, was wandering in the spreading plain of the desert. When the glance of the Sparrow lighted upon him, and that strange form came into his view, he said to himself: "I have fallen upon good! Come on, I will disclose the grief of my heart to this marvellous bird; perhaps he may undo the knot of my affairs and may show me the way to a remedy." Then with the utmost respect, he advanced to the Salamander, and after the usual salutation, paid the compliment of offering service. The Salamander, too, in a kind tone, expressed the courtesy required toward travellers and said: "The traces of weariness are discernible in thy countenance. If this arises from journeying, be pleased to halt some days in this neighbourhood; and if the case be aught else, explain it, that, to the extent of my power, I may exert myself to remedy it."

The Sparrow loosed his tongue, and represented to the Salamander his piteous condition, after a fashion, that, had he told it to a rock, it would have been rent in pieces by his distress.

After hearing his tale, the Salamander, too, felt the fire of compassion kindled, and he said; "Grieve not! for I will this night take such measures as to consume the Falcon's

abode and nest and all that therein is. Do thou point out to me thy dwelling, and go to thy offspring until the time I come to thee."

The Sparrow indicated his dwelling in such a way as not to leave a doubt in the mind of the Salamander; and with a glad heart turned toward his own nest. When the night came on, the Salamander, with a number of its own kind, each carrying a quantity of naphtha and brimstone, set off in the direction of the spot, and under the guidance of that Sparrow conveyed themselves to the vicinity of the Falcon's nest.

The latter, unaware of the impending misfortune, had, with its young, eaten plentifully and fallen asleep. The Salamanders cast upon their nest all the naphtha and brimstone that they had brought with them and turned back and the blast of justice fell upon those oppressors. They rose up from the sleep of negligence and all of them, with their abode and nest, were at once consumed to ashes.

And this instance is given that thou mayest know that every one who labours to repel an enemy, though he be small and weak, and his foe great and strong, may yet hope for victory and triumph.

The Hermit, the Thief, and the Demon

It is related that a Hermit of pure disposition, abstemious and virtuous, had made his cell in one of the environs of Baghdad, and passed his morning and evening hours in the worship of the All-wise King, and by these means had shaken his skirt clear from the dust of worldly affairs. He had bowed his head in the corner of contentment under the collar of freedom from care, and rested satisfied with the portion that was supplied to him from the invisible world.

One of his sincere disciples got knowledge of the poverty and fastings of the Holy Man, and by way of offering, brought to the hermitage a she buffalo, young and fat, with whose delicious milk the palate of desire was oiled and sweetened.

A thief beheld the circumstance, and his hungry appetite was excited; and he set off for the cell of the recluse. A demon, too, joined him in the likeness of a man. The thief asked him: "Who art thou, and whither goest thou?" He replied: "I am a demon, who have assumed this shape, and, putting on this guise, am going to the hermitage of the recluse, for many of the people of this country, through the blessing

of his instruction, have begun to repent and to be converted and the market of our temptations has become flat. I wish to get an opportunity and kill him. This is my story which thou hast heard; now, tell me, who art thou and what is thy story?" The thief replied: "I am a man whose trade is roguery, and I am occupied night and day with thinking how to steal some one's goods and impose the scar of affliction on his heart. I am now going, as the recluse has got a fat buffalo, to steal it and use it for my own wants." The demon said; "Praise be to God that the bond of kinship is strong between us, and this alone is sufficient to ally us, since the object of both is to assail him."

They then proceeded on their way, and at night reached the cell of the recluse. The latter had finished the performance of his daily worship, and had gone to sleep, just as he was, on his prayer-carpet. The thief bethought himself, that if the demon attempted to kill him he would probably awake and make an outcry; and the other people who were his neighbours, would be alarmed, and in that case it would be impossible to steal the buffalo. The demon, too, reflected that if the thief carried off the buffalo from the house, he must of course

open the door. Then the noise of the door would very likely awaken the recluse, and he should have to postpone killing him. He then said to the thief: "Do thou wait and give me time to kill the hermit, and then do thou steal the buffalo." The thief rejoined: "Stop thou till I steal the buffalo, and then kill the hermit."

This difference was prolonged between them, and at last the words of both came to wrangling. The thief was so annoyed that he called out to the recluse: "There is a demon here who wants to kill thee." The demon, too, shouted: "Here is a thief, who wants to steal thy buffalo."

The hermit was roused by the uproar, and raised a cry, whereupon the neighbours came, and both the thief and the demon ran way; and the life and property of the Holy Man remained safe and secure through the quarrel of his enemies.

When the two hostile armies fall to strife,
Then from its sheath what need to draw the knife?

The King and the Hawk

It is related that in ancient times there was a King fond of hunting. He was ever giving reins to the courser of his desire in the pursuit of game, and was always casting the lasso of

gladness over the neck of sport. Now this King had a Hawk, who at a single flight could bring down a pebble from the peak of the Caucasus, and in terror of whose claws the constellation Aquila kept himself in the green nest of the sky; and the King had a prodigious fondness for this Hawk and always cared for it with his own hands.

It happened one day that the Monarch, holding the Hawk on his hand, had gone to the chase. A stag leapt up before him and he galloped after it with the utmost eagerness. But he did not succeed in coming up with it, and became separated from his retinue and servants; and though some of them followed him, the King rode so hotly that the morning breeze could not have reached the dust he raised.

Meantime the fire of his thirst was kindled, and the intense desire to drink overcame the King. He galloped his steed in every direction in search of water until he reached the skirt of a mountain, and beheld that from its summit limpid water was trickling. The King drew forth a cup which he had in his quiver, and riding under the mountain filled the cup with that water, which fell drop by drop, and was about to take a draught, when the Hawk made a blow with his wing, and spilled all the water

in the goblet. The King was vexed at this action, but held the cup a second time under the rock, until it was brimful. He then raised it to his lips again, and again the Hawk made a movement and overthrew the cup. The King rendered impatient by thirst, dashed the Hawk on the ground and killed it.

Shortly after a stirrup-holder of the King came up and saw the Hawk dead, and the Monarch athirst. He then undid a water-vessel from his saddle-cord and washed the cup clean, and was about to give the King a drink. The latter bade him ascend the mountain, as he had an inclination for the pure water which trickled from the rock; and could not wait to collect it in the cup, drop by drop. The stirrup-holder ascended the mountain and beheld a spring giving out a drop at a time with a hundred stintings; and a huge serpent lay dead on the margin of the fountain; and as the heat of the sun had taken effect upon it, the poisonous saliva mixed with the water of that mountain, and it trickled drop by drop down the rock.

The stirrup-holder was overcome with horror, and came down from the mountain bewildered, and represented the state of the case, and gave the King a cup of cold water from his ewer. The latter raised the cup to his lips,

and his eyes overflowed with tears. The attendant asked the reason of his weeping. The King drew a sigh from his anguished heart and relating in full the story of the Hawk and the spilling of the water in the cup, said: "I grieve for the death of the Hawk, and bemoan my own deed in that without inquiry I have deprived a creature, so dear to me, of life." The attendant replied: "This Hawk protected thee from a great peril, and has established a claim to the gratitude of all the people of this country. It would have been better if the King had not been precipitate in slaying it, and had quenched the fire of wrath with the water of mildness."

The King replied; "I repent of this unseemly action; but my repentance is now unavailing, and the wound of this sorrow cannot be healed by any salve"; and this story is related in order that it may be known that many such incidents have occurred where, through the disastrous results of precipitation, men have fallen into the whirlpool of repentance.

The Mouse and the Frog

It is related that a Mouse had taken up its abode on the brink of a fountain and had fixed its residence at the foot of a tree.

A Frog, too, passed his time in the water

there, and sometimes came to the margin of the pool to take the air. One day, coming to the edge of the water, he continued uttering his voice in a heart-rending cadence and assumed himself to be a nightingale of a thousand melodies.

At that time the Mouse was engaged in chanting in a corner of his cell. Directly he heard the uproarious yelling of the Frog he was astounded, and came out with the intention of taking a look at the reciter; and while occupied with listening to him, kept smiting his hands together and shaking his head. These gestures, which seemed to display approbation, pleased the Frog and he made advances toward acquaintance with him. In short, being mutually pleased with each other, they became inseparable companions, and used to narrate to each other entertaining stories and tales.

One day the Mouse said to the Frog: "I am oftentimes desirous of disclosing to thee a secret and recounting to thee a grief which I have at heart, and at that moment thou art abiding under the water. However much I shout thou hearest me not, owing to the noise of the water, and in spite of my crying to thee, the sound cannot reach thee, because of the clamour of the other frogs. We must devise

some means by which thou mayest know when I come to the brink of the water, and thus mayest be informed of my arrival without my shouting to thee."

The Frog said: "Thou speakest the truth. I, too, have often pondered uneasily, thinking, should my friend come to the brink of the water, how shall I, at the bottom of this fountain, learn his arrival? And it sometimes happens that I, too, come to the mouth of thy hole, and thou hast gone out from another side, and I have to wait long. I had intended to have touched somewhat on this subject before, but now the arrangement of it rests with thee."

The Mouse replied: "I have got hold of the thread of a plan, and it appears to me the best thing to get a long string, and to fasten one end to thy foot, and tie the other tight around my own, in order that when I come to the water's edge and shake the string, thou mayest know what I want; and if thou, too, art so kind as to come to the door of my cell, I may also get information by thy jerking the string." Both parties agreed to this, and the knot of friendship was in this manner firmly secured, and they were also kept informed of one another's condition. One day, the Mouse came to the water's

edge to seek the Frog, in order to renew their friendly converse. All of a sudden a Crow, like an unforeseen calamity, flew down from the air, and snatching up the Mouse, soared aloft, with him. The string which was tied to the leg of the Mouse drew forth the Frog from the bottom of the water, and, as the other leg was fastened to the Frog's leg, he was suspended head downward in the air. The Crow flew on, holding the Mouse in its beak, and lower still the Frog hanging head downward. People witnessing that extraordinary sight were uttering in the road various jokes and sarcasms: "A strange thing this, that contrary to his wont, a crow has made a prey of a frog!" and "Never before was a frog the prey of a crow!"

The Frog was howling out in reply: "Now, too, a Frog is not the prey of a Crow, but from the bad luck of associating with a Mouse, I have been caught in this calamity, and he who associates with a different species deserves a thousand times as much."

And this story carries with it this beneficial advice: That no one ought to associate with one of a different race, in order that, like the Frog, he may not be suspended on the string of calamity.

The Crow and the Partridge

It is related that one day a Crow was flying and saw a Partridge, which was walking gracefully on the ground with a quick step and graceful gait that enchanted the heart of the looker-on.

The Crow was pleased with the gait of the Partridge, and amazed at its agility. The desire of walking in the same manner fixed itself in his mind, and the insane longing to step proudly, after this fascinating fashion, made its appearance. He forthwith girt his loins in attendance on the Partridge, and abandoning sleep and food, gave himself up to that arduous occupation, and kept continually running in the traces of the Partridge and gazing on its progress.

One day the Partridge said: "O crazy, black-faced one! I observe that thou art ever hovering about me, and art always watching my motions. What is it that thou dost want?"

The Crow replied: "O thou of graceful manners and sweet smiling face, know that having conceived a desire to learn thy gait, I have followed thy steps for a long time past, and wish to acquire thy manner of walking, in

order that I may place the foot of preëminence on the head of my fellows."

The Partridge uttered a merry laugh, and said: "Alack! alack! My walking gracefully is a thing implanted in me by nature, and thy style of going is equally a natural characteristic. My going is in one way, and thy mode of procedure is quite another. Leave off this fancy and relinquish this idea."

The Crow replied: "Since I have plunged into this affair, no idle stories shall make me give it up; and until I grasp my wished-for object, I will not turn back from this road."

So the unfortunate Crow for a long time ran after the Partridge, and having failed to learn his method of going, forgot his own too, and could in nowise recover it.

FABLES FROM THE HITOPADESA

"This work entitled Hitopadesa, or Friendly Instructor, affordeth elegance in the Sanskrit idioms, in every part variety of language, and inculcateth the doctrine of prudence and policy."

FABLES FROM THE HITOPADESA

The Traveller and the Tiger

A traveller, through lust of gold, being plunged into an inextricable mire, is killed and devoured by an old tiger.

AS I was travelling on the southern road, once upon a time, I saw an old Tiger seated upon the bank of a large river, with a bunch of kusa grass in his paw, calling out to every one who passed: "Ho! ho! traveller, take this golden bracelet," but every one was afraid to approach him to receive it. At length, however, a certain wayfarer, tempted by avarice, regarded it as an instance of good fortune; but, said he, in this there is personal danger, in which we are not warranted to proceed. Yet, said he, there is risk in every undertaking for the acquisition of wealth.

The Traveller then asked where was the bracelet; and the Tiger, having held out his paw, showed it to him and said, "Look at it, it is a golden bracelet." "How shall I place confidence in thee?" said the Traveller; and the Tiger replied: "Formerly, in the days of my

youth, I was of a very wicked disposition, and as a punishment for the many men and cattle I had murdered, my numerous children died, and I was also deprived of my wife; so, at present, I am destitute of relations. This being the case, I was advised, by a certain holy person, to practise charity and other religious duties, and I am now grown extremely devout. I perform ablutions regularly, and am charitable. Why, then, am I not worthy of confidence?"

"So far, you see," continued the Tiger, "I have an interest in wishing to give away to some one this golden bracelet from off my own wrist; and as thou appearest to be rather a poor man, I prefer giving it to thee; according to this saying:

"'Make choice of the poor, and bestow not thy gifts on others.' Then go, and having purified thyself in this stream, take the golden bracelet."

The Traveller no sooner began to enter the river to purify himself, than he stuck fast in the mud, and was unable to escape. The Tiger told him he would help him out; and creeping softly toward him, the poor man was seized, and instantly exclaimed to himself: "Alas! the career of my heart is cut short by fate!"

But whilst the unfortunate fellow was thus meditating, he was devoured by the Tiger. Hence also, it is at no time proper to undertake anything without examination.

The Jackal and the Cat

To one whose family and profession are unknown, one should not give residence: the Jackal Jarad-gava was killed through the fault of a Cat.

On the banks of the river Bhageerathee, and upon the mountain Greedhra-koota, there is a large parkattee tree, in the hollow of whose trunk there dwelt a Jackal, by name Jarad-gava, who, by some accident, was grown blind, and for whose support the different birds who roosted upon the branches of the same tree were wont to contribute a trifle from their own stores, by which he existed. It so fell out, that one day a certain Cat, by name Deerga-karna,[1] came there to prey upon the young birds, whom perceiving, the little nestlings were greatly terrified, and began to be very clamorous; and their cries being heard by Jarad-gava, he asked who was coming. The Cat Deerga-karna, too, seeing the Jackal, began to be alarmed, and said to himself: "Oh! I shall certainly be killed, for now that I am in his sight, it will not be in my power

[1]Long-ear

to escape. However, let what will be the consequence, I will approach him. So, having thus resolved, he went up to the Jackal, and said: "Master, I salute thee!" "Who art thou?" demanded the Jackal. Said he, "I am a Cat." "Ah! wicked animal," cried the Jackal, "get thee at a distance; for if thou dost not, I will put thee to death."

"Hear me for a moment," replied Puss, "and then determine whether I merit either to be punished or to be killed; for what is any one, simply by birth, to be punished or applauded? When his deeds have been scrutinized, he may, indeed, be either praiseworthy or punishable."

The Jackal after this desired the Cat to give some account of himself, and he complied in the following words: "I am," said he, "in the constant habit of performing ablutions on the side of this river; I never eat flesh, and I lead that mode of life which is called Brahma-Charya[1]. So, as thou art distinguished amongst those of thy own species, noted for skill in religious matters, and as a repository of confidence, and as the birds here are always speaking before me in praise of thy good qualities, I am come to hear from thy mouth, who

[1]Forsaking all worldly concerns to lead a godly life.

art so old in wisdom, the duties of religion. Thou, master, art acquainted with the customs of life; but these young birds, who are in ignorance, would fain drive me, who am a stranger, away. The duties of a housekeeper are thus enjoined:

"Hospitality is commanded to be exercised, even toward an enemy, when he cometh to thine house. The tree doth not withdraw its shade, even from the wood-cutter.

"And again:

"Some straw, a room, water, and in the fourth place, gentle words. These things are never to be refused in good men's houses."

To all this the Jackal replied: "Cats have a taste for animal food, and above is the residence of the young birds: it is on this account I speak to thee."

The Cat, having touched his two ears, and then the ground, exclaimed: "I, who have read books upon the duties of religion, and am freed from inordinate desires, have forsaken such an evil practice; and, indeed, even amongst those who dispute with one another about the authority of the Sastras, there are many by whom this sentence: 'Not to kill is a supreme duty,' is altogether approved."

The Cat by these means having satisfied the Jackal, he remained in the hollow of the tree

with him and passed the time in amusing conversation; and the Jackal told the young birds that they had no occasion to go out of the way.

After this, when many days had passed, it was discovered that the Cat had, by degrees, drawn all the little birds down into the hollow of the tree, and there devoured them; but when he found inquiry was about to be made by those whose young ones had been eaten, he slipped out of the hole and made his escape. In the meantime, the bones of the young ones having been discovered in the hollow of the tree by the parent birds, who had been searching here and there, they concluded that their little ones had been devoured by the Jackal, and so, being joined by other birds, they put him to death.

Wherefore I say, "To one whose family and profession are unknown, one should not give residence."

The Greedy Jackal

A hoard should always be made; but not too great a hoard. A Jackal, through the fault of hoarding too much, was killed by a bow.

A CERTAIN Huntsman, by name Bhirava, being fond of flesh, once upon a time went to hunt in the forests of the Vindhya mountains and having killed a Deer, as he was carrying him away, he chanced to see a wild Boar of

a formidable appearance. So, laying the Deer upon the ground, he wounded the Boar with an arrow; but, upon his approaching him, the horrid animal set up a roar dreadful as the thunder of the clouds, and wounding the Huntsman in the groin, he fell like a tree cut off by the axe. At the same time, a Serpent, of that species which is called Ajagara, pressed by hunger and wandering about, rose up and bit the Boar, who instantly fell helpless upon him, and remained upon the spot. For:

The body having encountered some efficient cause, water, fire, poison, the sword, hunger, sickness, or a fall from an eminence, is forsaken by the vital spirits.

In the meantime, a Jackal, by name Deergharava, prowling about in search of prey, discovered the Deer, the Huntsman, and the Boar; and having observed them, he said to himself: "Here is a fine feast prepared for me; with their flesh I shall have food to eat. The Man will last me for a whole month, and the Deer and the Boar for two more; then the Serpent will serve me a day; and let me taste the bow-string too. But, in the first place, let me try that which is the least savoury. Suppose, then, I eat this catgut line which is fastened to the bow: saying so, he drew near to eat it; but the instant he had bit the line

in two, he was torn asunder by the spring of the bow; and he was reduced to the state of the five elements. I say, therefore, "A hoard should always be made; but not too great a hoard."

The Elephant and the Jackal

That which cannot be effected by force may be achieved by cunning. An Elephant was killed by a Jackal, in going over a swampy place.

In the forest Brahmaranya there was an Elephant, whose name was Karphooratilaka,[1] who having been observed by the jackals, they all determined that if he could by any stratagem be killed, he would be four months' provisions for them all. One of them, who was of exceeding vicious inclination and by nature treacherous, declared that he would engage, by the strength of his own judgment, to effect his death. Some time after, this deceitful wretch went up to the Elephant, and having saluted him, said: "Godlike sir! Condescend to grant me an audience." "Who art thou?" demanded the Elephant, "and whence comest thou?" "My name," replied he, "is Kshudrabuddhi,[2] a jackal, sent into thy pressence by all the inhabitants of the forest, assembled for that purpose, to represent that,

[1] Marked with white spots.

[2] Low-minded, mean-spirited, bad-hearted.

as it is not expedient to reside in so large a forest as this without a chief, your Highness, endued with all the cardinal virtues, hath been selected to be anointed Rajah of the Woods. Then, that we may not lose the lucky moment," continued the Jackal, "be pleased to follow quickly." Saying this, he cocked his tail and went away.

The Elephant, whose reason was perverted by the lust of power, took the same road as the Jackal, and followed him so exactly that, at length, he stuck fast in a great mire. "O my friend!" cried the Elephant, "what is to be done in this disaster? I am sinking in a deep mire!"

The Jackal laughed, and said: "Please, your divine Highness, take hold of my tail with your trunk, and get out! This is the fruit of those words which thou didst place confidence in."

They say:

As often as thou shalt be deprived of the society of the good, so often shalt thou fall into the company of knaves.

After a few days, the Elephant dying for want of food, his flesh was devoured by the Jackals. I say, therefore: "That which cannot be effected by force, may be achieved by cunning."

The Lion, the Mouse, and the Cat

The master should never be rendered free from apprehension by his servants; for a servant having quieted the fears of his master may experience the fate of Dahdikarna.[1]

Upon the mountain Arbuda-sikhara, there was a Lion, whose name was Mahavikrama,[2] the tips of whose mane a Mouse was wont to gnaw, as he slept in his den. The noble beast, having discovered that his hair was bitten, was very much displeased; and as he was unable to catch the offender, who always slipped into his hole, he meditated what was best to be done; and having resolved, said he:

"Whoso hath a trifling enemy, who is not to be overcome by dint of valour, should employ against him a force of his own likeness."

With a review of this saying, the Lion repaired to the village, and by means of a piece of meat thrown into his hole, with some difficulty caught a Cat, whose name was Dadhikarna. He carried him home, and the Mouse for some time being afraid to venture out, the Lion remained with his hair unnipped. At length, however, the Mouse was so oppressed with hunger, that creeping about he was caught and devoured by the Cat. The Lion now, no

[1] Whose ears are the colour of curds.

[2] Great courage.

longer hearing the noise of the Mouse, thought he had no further occasion for the services of the Cat, and so began to be sparing of his allowance; and, in consequence, poor Puss pined away and died for want. Wherefore, I say: "The master should never be rendered free from apprehension by his servants."

The Poor Woman and the Bell

It is not proper to be alarmed by a mere sound, when the cause of that sound is unknown. A poor woman obtaineth consequence for discovering the cause of a sound.

Between the mountains Sree-parvata there is a city called Brahma-puree, the inhabitants of which used to believe that a certain giant, whom they called Ghautta-Karna, infested one of the adjacent hills.

The fact was thus: A thief, as he was running away with a Bell he had stolen, was overcome and devoured by a tiger; and the Bell falling from his hand having been picked up by some monkeys, every now and then they used to ring it. Now the people of the town finding that a man had been killed there, and at the same time hearing the Bell, used to declare that the giant Ghautta-Karna being enraged, was devouring a man, and ringing his Bell; so that the city was abandoned by all the principal inhabitants. At length, how-

ever, a certain Poor Woman having considered the subject, discovered that the Bell was rung by the monkeys.

She accordingly went to the Rajah, and said: "If, divine sir, I may expect a very great reward, I will engage to silence this Ghautta-Karna."

The Rajah was exceedingly well pleased, and gave her some money. So having displayed her consequence to the priesthood of the country, to the leaders of the army, and to all the rest of the people, she provided such fruits as she conceived the monkeys were fond of, and went into the wood; where strewing them about, they presently quitted the Bell, and attached themselves to the fruit. The Poor Woman, in the meantime, took away the Bell, and repaired to the city, where she became an object of adoration to its inhabitants. Wherefore, I say: "It is not proper to be alarmed by a mere sound, when the cause of the sound is unknown."

The Lion and the Rabbit

He who hath sense hath strength. Where hath he strength who wanteth judgment? See how a Lion, when intoxicated with anger, was overcome by a Rabbit.

Upon a certain mountain there lived a Lion, whose name was Durganta,[1] who was perpetually

[1] Hard to go near.

sacrificing animals to his gods; so that, at length, all the different species assembled, and, in a body, represented that, as by his present mode of proceeding the forest would be cleared all at once; if it pleased his Highness, they would, each of them in his turn, provide him an animal for his daily food; and the Lion gave his consent accordingly. So every beast delivered his stipulated provision, till at length, in coming to the Rabbit's turn he began to meditate in this manner: "Policy should be practised by him who would save his life; and I myself shall lose mine, if I do not take care. Suppose I lead him after another Lion? Who knows how that may turn out for me? Then I will approach him slowly, as if fatigued."

The Lion by this time began to be very hungry; so, seeing the Rabbit coming toward him, he called out in a great passion: "What is the reason thou comest so late?" "Please your Highness," said the Rabbit "as I was coming along, I was forcibly detained by another of your species; but having given him my word that I would return immediately I came here to represent it to your Highness." "Go quickly," said the Lion in a rage, "and show me where this vile wretch may be found?"

Accordingly the Rabbit conducted the Lion

to the brink of a deep well, where being arrived, "There," said the Rabbit, "look down and behold him"; at the same time he pointed to the reflected image of the Lion in the water; who swelling with pride and resentment, leaped into the well, as he thought, upon his adversary, and thus put an end to his own life. I repeat, therefore: "He who hath sense, hath strength."

The Birds and the Monkeys

A wise man is worthy to be advised; but an ignorant one never. Certain birds, having given advice to a troop of monkeys, have their nests torn to pieces, and are obliged to fly away.

On the banks of the river Navmoda, upon a neighbouring mountain, there was a large Salmalee tree wherein certain Birds were wont to build their nests and reside, even during the season of the rains. One day the sky being overcast with a troop of thick dark clouds, there fell a shower of rain in very large streams. The Birds seeing a troop of Monkeys at the foot of the tree, all wet, and shivering with cold, called out to them; "Ho, Monkeys! why don't you invent something to protect you from the rain? We build ourselves nests with straws collected with nothing else but our bills. How is this, that you, who are blessed with hands and feet, yield to such sufferings?"

The Monkeys hearing this, and understanding it as a kind of reproach, were exceedingly irritated and said amongst themselves: "Those Birds there, sitting comfortably out of the wind within their warm nests, are laughing at us! So let them, as long as the shower may last." In short, as soon as the rain subsided, the whole troop of them mounted into the tree, where tearing all the nests to pieces, the eggs fell upon the ground and were broken. I say, therefore: "A wise man is worthy to be advised, but an ignorant one never."

The Rabbits and the Elephants

Great things may be effected by wise counsel, when a sovereign enemy may be too powerful. Certain Rabbits were enabled to live in comfort, through the policy of one of their brethren.

Once upon a time, for want of rain in due season, a troop of Elephants being greatly distressed for water, addressed their chief in these words: "What resource have we, except in that hollow sinking ground inhabited by those little animals! but deprived of that too, whither, sir, shall we go? What shall we do?"

Upon hearing their complaints, their chief, after travelling with them a great way, discovered a fountain of clear water. But, as many Rabbits who happened to be in their

burrows were crushed to death under the feet of so many Elephants trampling over their warren, at length, one of them, reflected in this manner: "This troop of Elephants, oppressed with thirst, will be coming here every day to drink, and, at length, our whole race will be destroyed!" But an old buck said to him. "Brother, don't be uneasy; for I am going to prevent what thou dreadest." Saying which, he set off to try how he could oppose them; but as he went along, he began to consider how he should approach so formidable a troop; "for," observed he, "they say:

'An elephant killeth even by touching, a serpent even by smelling, a king even by ruling, and a wicked man by laughing at one.'

"Wherefore, I will mount the summit of a rock to address the head of the troop."

This being put in execution accordingly, the chief Elephant asked him who he was, and whence he came. "I am," he replied, "an ambassador sent here by the god Chandra." "Declare the purport of thy commission," said the Elephant. "Sir," replied the Rabbit, "as ambassadors, even when the weapons of war are lifted up, speak not otherwise than for the benefit of their State; and although they speak boldly according as it is their advan-

tage, they are not to be put to death; then I will declare what are the commands of the god Chandra. He bade me say, that in driving away and destroying the Rabbits who are appointed to guard the fountain which is consecrated to that duty, you have done ill; 'for,' said he, 'they are my guards and it is notorious that the figure of a Rabbit is my emblem.'"

The head Elephant, upon hearing this became greatly alarmed, declared that they had offended through ignorance, and would never go to the fountain again.

"If this be your resolution," said the ambassador, "go this once, and make your submission before the diety himself, whom you will see in the fountain, quite agitated with anger; and when you have pacified him, you may depart."

Accordingly, as soon as it was night, the ambassador Vijaya having conducted the chief of the Elephants to the fountain, there showed him the image of the moon, trembling, as it were, upon the smooth surface of the water and when he had made him bow down to it, in token of submission, he said: "Please your divinity! What hath been done having been done through ignorance, I pray thee pardon them!" and upon saying this, he caused the Elephant to depart. I repeat, therefore,

"Great things may be effected by wise counsel, when a sovereign enemy may be too powerful."

The Blue Jackal

The fool who forsaketh his own party, and delighteth to dwell with the opposite side may be killed by them; as was the case with the Blue Jackal

A CERTAIN Jackal, as he was roaming about the borders of a town, just as his inclinations led him, fell into a dyer's vat;[1] but being unable to get out in the morning he feigned himself dead. At length, the master of the vat, which was filled with indigo, came, and seeing a Jackal lying with his legs uppermost, his eyes closed, and his teeth bare, concluded that he was dead, and so, taking him out, he carried him a good way from the town, and there left him. The sly animal instantly got up, and ran into the woods; when, observing that his coat was turned blue, he meditated in this manner: "I am now of the finest colour! what great exaltation may I not bring about for myself?" Saying this, he called a number of Jackals together, and addressed them in the following words: "Know that I have lately been sprinkled king of the forests, by the hands of the goddess herself who presides

[1] A dyer's vat, in Hindostan, is a large pan sunk in the ground, often in the little court before the dyer's house.

over these woods, with a water drawn from a variety of choice herbs. Observe my colour, and henceforward let every business be transacted according to my orders."

The rest of the Jackals, seeing him of such a fine complexion, prostrated themselves before him, and said: "According as your Highness commands!" By this step he made himself honoured by his own relations, and so gained the supreme power over those of his own species, as well as all the other inhabitants of the forests. But after a while, finding himself surrounded by a levée of the first quality, such as the tiger and the like, he began to look down upon his relations; and, at length, he kept them at a distance. A certain old Jackal perceiving that his brethren were very much cast down at this behaviour, cried: "Do not despair! If it continues thus, this imprudent friend of ours will force us to be revenged. Let me alone to contrive his downfall. The lion, and the rest who pay him court, are taken by his outward appearance; and they obey him as their king, because they are not aware that he is nothing but a Jackal: do something then by which he may be found out. Let this plan be pursued: Assemble all of you in a body about the close of the evening, and set up one

general howl in his hearing; and I'll warrant you, the natural disposition of his species will incline him to join in the cry for:

'Whatever may be the natural propensity of any one is very hard to be overcome. If a dog were made king, would he not gnaw his shoe straps?'

"And thus, the tiger discovering that he is nothing but a Jackal, will presently put him to death."

In short, the plan was executed, and the event was just as it had been foretold. I repeat, therefore: "The fool who forsaketh his own party and delighteth to dwell with the opposite side, may be killed by them."

The Mouse Who Became a Tiger

One of low degree, having obtained a worthy station, seeketh to destroy his master; like the mouse, who having been raised to the state of a Tiger, went to kill the Hermit.

In a certain forest, there once dwelt a Hermit whose name was Maha-tapa. One day seeing a young Mouse fall from the mouth of a crow near his hermitage, out of compassion he took it up and reared it with broken particles of rice. He now observed that the cat was seeking to destroy it; so, by the sacred powers of a saint, he metamorphosed his Mouse into a cat; but his cat being afraid of his dog, he

changed her into a dog; and the dog being terrified at the tiger, at length he was transformed into a Tiger. The holy man now regarded the Tiger as no way superior to his Mouse. But the people who came to visit the Hermit, used to tell one another that the Tiger which they saw there had been made so by the power of the saint, from a Mouse; and this being overheard by the Tiger, he was very uneasy, and said to himself: "As long as this Hermit is alive, the disgraceful story of my former state will be brought to my ears"; saying which he went to kill his protector; but as the holy man penetrated his design with his supernatural eye, he reduced him to his former state of a Mouse. I repeat, therefore: "One of low degree, having obtained a worthy station, may seek to destroy his master."

The Brahmin and the Goat

He who, judging by what passeth in his own breast, believeth a knave to be a person of veracity, is deceived; as the Brahmin was concerning his Goat.

In a certain forest, a Brahmin, having determined to make an offering, went to a neighbouring village and purchased a Goat, which having thrown across his shoulder, he turned toward home. As he was travelling

along, he was perceived by three thieves. "If," said they, "we could by some artifice get the Goat from that man, it would be a great proof of our address."

Saying this, they agreed upon their stratagem, and executed it in this manner: They stationed themselves before the Brahmin, and sat down under the trees in the road which led to his habitation, till he should come up to them. Soon after, he was accosted by one of them in this manner: "Is not that a dog? Brahmin, what is the reason thou carriest it upon thy shoulder?" The Brahmin replied: "No, it is not a dog; it is a Goat, which I have purchased to make an offering of." About a mile farther on he met another of them, who repeating the same question, he took the Goat from his shoulder, and putting it upon the ground, examined it again and again; and at length, replacing it upon his shoulder, he went on, quite staggered as it were, for:

The minds even of good men are staggered by the arguments of the wicked; but those who place confidence in them may suffer by it.

At length the Brahmin, having heard the third thief, like the former two, insist upon it that he had a dog upon his shoulder, was convinced that it was indeed a dog; and so,

leaving his Goat behind him, which the thieves presently took away and made a feast of, the good man washed himself and went home. Whence, I say, "He who, judging by what passeth in his own breast, believeth a knave to be a person of veracity, is deceived."

FABLES FROM INDIA

"These simple children's stories have livea on, and maintained their place of honour and their undisputed sway in every schoolroom of the East and every nursery of the West."

F. Max Müller

FABLES FROM INDIA

The Lion, the Fox, and the Story-teller

A LION who was the king of a great forest once said to his subjects: "I want some one among you to tell me stories one after another without ceasing. If you fail to find somebody who can so amuse me, you will all be put to death."

In the East there is a proverb which says: "The king kills when he will," so the animals were in great alarm.

The Fox said: "Fear not; I shall save you all. Tell the king the Story-teller is ready to come to court when ordered." So the animals had orders to send the Story-teller at once to the presence. The Fox bowed respectfully, and stood before the king, who said: "So you are to tell us stories without ceasing?"

"Yes, your Majesty," said the Fox.

"Then begin," said the Lion.

"But before I do so," said the Fox, "I would like to know what your Majesty means by a story."

"Why," said the Lion, "a narrative containg ing some interesting event or fact."

"Just so," said the Fox, and began: "There was once a fisherman who went to sea with a huge net, and spread it far and wide. A great many fish got into it. Just as the fisherman was about to draw the net the coils snapped. A great opening was made. First one fish escaped." Then the Fox stopped.

"What then?" said the Lion.

"Then two escaped," said the Fox.

"What then?" asked the impatient Lion.

"Then three escaped," said the Fox. Thus, as often as the Lion repeated his query, the Fox increased the number by one, and said as many escaped. The Lion was vexed, and said: "Why you are telling me nothing new!"

"I wish that your majesty may not forget your royal word," said the Fox. "Each event occurred by itself, and each lot that escaped was different from the rest."

"But wherein is the wonder?" said the Lion

"Why, your majesty, what can be more wonderful than for Fish to escape in lots, each exceeding the other by one?"

"I am bound by my word," said the Lion, "else I would see your carcass stretched on the ground."

The Fox replied in a whisper: "*If tyrants that desire things impossible are not at least bound by their own word, their subjects can find nothing to bind them.*"

The Fox in the Well

A Fox fell into a well, and was holding hard to some roots at the side of it, just above the water. A Wolf who was passing by saw him, and said, "Hollo, Reynard; after all you have fallen into a well!"

"But not without a purpose, and not without the means of getting out of it," said the Fox.

"What do you mean?" said the Wolf.

"Why," said the Fox, "there is a drought all over the country now, and the water in this well is the only means of appeasing the thirst of the thousands that live in this neighbourhood. They held a meeting, and requested me to keep the water from going down lower; so I am holding it up for the public good."

"What will be your reward?" asked the Wolf.

"They will give me a pension, and save me the trouble of going about every day in quest of food, not to speak of innumerable other privileges that will be granted me. Further, I am not to stay here all day. I have asked

a kinsman of mine, to whom I have communicated the secret of holding up the water, to relieve me from time to time. Of course he will also get a pension, and have other privileges. I expect him here shortly."

"Ah, Reynard, may I relieve you, then? May I hope to get a pension, and other privileges? You know what a sad lot is mine, especially in winter."

"Certainly," said the Fox, "but you must get a long rope, that I may come up and let you down."

So the Wolf got a rope. Up came the Fox, and down went the Wolf; when the former observed, with a laugh, "My dear sir, you may remain there till doomsday, or till the owner of the well throws up your carcass," and left the place.

"Alas!" said the Wolf, when it was too late, "*greed hath its meed!*"

The Fawn and the Little Tiger

A Fawn met a little Tiger, and said: "What fine stripes you have!"

The little Tiger said: "What fine spots you have!"

Then the Fawn said: "It would be such a nice thing if you and I were to live together

as friends. We might then roam through the woods as we like, and be so happy!"

"I think so too," said the Tiger.

The two joined hands, and went out for a long walk. It was breakfast time. The Fawn saw some fine grass in the lawn, and said to himself: "One should first see his friend fed and then feed." So he turned to the Tiger and said, "Will you have some of this fine grass for your breakfast?"

The Tiger put his nose to the grass but could not bring himself to feed upon it, because it was against his nature; so he replied, "I am so sorry, I cannot eat it!"

Then the Fawn said: "Allow me to go home for one moment and ask mamma for something that would suit you for breakfast."

So the Fawn went home and told the Hind of the happy friendship he had formed, and of all that had happened since.

The Hind replied, "Child, how lucky it is that you have come away! You must know the Tiger is the most deadly enemy we have in the woods."

At these words the Fawn drew near to his dam and trembled.

The Hind said: "*It is indeed lucky to get away from the wicked at the first hint!*"

The Fox and the Villagers

A Fox that had long been the dread of the village poultry yard was one day found lying breathless in a field. The report went abroad that, after all, he had been caught and killed by some one. In a moment, everybody in the village came out to see the dead Fox. The village Cock, with all his hens and chicks, was also there, to enjoy the sight.

The Fox then got up, and, shaking off his drowsiness, said: "I ate a number of hens and chicks last night; hence I must have slumbered longer than usual."

The Cock counted his hens and chicks, and found a number wanting. "Alas!" said he, "how is it I did not know of it?"

"My dear sir," said the Fox, as he retreated to the wood, "it was last night I had a good meal on your hens and chicks, yet you did not know of it. A moment ago they found me lying in the field, and you knew of it at once. *Ill news travels fast!*"

Tinsel and Lightning

A PIECE of Tinsel on a rock once said to a Pebble: "You see how bright I am! I am by birth related to the lightning."

"Indeed!" said the Pebble; "then accept my humble respects."

Some time after, a flash of lightning struck the rock, and the Tinsel lost all its brilliancy by the scorching effects of the flash.

"Where is your brilliancy now?" said the Pebble.

"Oh, it is gone to the skies," said the Tinsel, "for I have lent it to the lightning that came down a moment ago to borrow it of me."

"Dear me!" said the Pebble; "*how many fibs doth good bragging need!*"

The Glow-worm and the Daw

A Jackdaw once ran up to a Glow-worm and was about to seize him. "Wait a moment, good friend," said the Worm; "and you shall hear of something to your advantage."

"Ah! what is it?" said the Daw.

"I am but one of the many Glow-worms that live in this forest. If you wish to have them all, follow me," said the Glow-worm.

"Certainly!" said the Daw.

Then the Glow-worm led him to a place in the wood where a fire had been kindled by some woodmen, and pointing to the sparks flying about, said: "There you find the Glow-worms warming themselves around a fire. When you

have done with them, I will show you some more, at a distance from this place."

The Daw darted at the sparks, and tried to swallow some of them; but his mouth being burnt by the attempt, he ran away exclaiming, "Ah, the Glow-worm is a dangerous little creature!"

Said the Glow-worm with pride: "*Wickedness yields to wisdom!*"

The Lion and the Gadfly

Once a Lion was sleeping in his den at the foot of a great mountain when a Gadfly that had been sipping the blood from his mouth bit him severely. The Lion started up with a roar, and catching the Fly in his huge paws, cried: "Villain, you are at my mercy! How shall I punish your impudence?"

"Sire," said the Fly, "if you would pardon me now, and let me live, I shall be able to show ere long how grateful I am to you."

"Indeed!" said the Lion; "who ever heard of a Gadfly helping a Lion? But still I admire your presence of mind and grant your life."

Some time after, the Lion, having made great havoc on the cattle of a neighbouring village, was snoring away in his den after a heavy meal. The village hunters approached

with the object of surrounding him and putting an end to his depredations.

The Fly saw them, and hurrying into the den, bit the Lion. He started up with a roar as before, and cried: "Villain, you will get no pardon this time!"

"Sire," said the Fly, "the village are on their way to your den; you can't tarry a moment here without being surrounded and killed."

"Saviour of my life!" cried the lion as he ran up the mountain. "*There is nothing like forgiving, for it enables the humblest to help the highest.*"

The Sunling

In the good old days a Clown in the East, on a visit to a city kinsman, while at dinner pointed to a burning candle and asked what it was. The city man said, in jest, it was a Sunling, or one of the children of the sun.

The Clown thought that it was something rare; so he waited for an opportunity, and hid it in a chest of drawers close by. Soon the chest caught fire, then the curtains by its side, then the room, then the whole house.

After the flames had been put down, the city man and the Clown went into the burnt building to see what remained. The Clown turned over

the embers of the chest of drawers. The city man asked what he was seeking for. The Clown said: "It is in this chest that I hid the bright Sunling; I wish to know if he has survived the flames."

"Alas," said the city man, who now found out the cause of all the mischief, "*Never jest with fools!*"

The Despot and the Wag

A Despot in the East wished to have a great name as a very munificent prince, so he gave large presents to every one of note that came to his court, but at the same time his officers had secret orders to waylay the recipients of his gifts and recover them.

In this manner many a man had been rewarded and plundered. Once a wag came to court, and amused every one by his drolleries. The King gave him a great many presents, including a horse. After taking leave of the King and his courtiers, the Wag bundled up the presents and put them over his shoulders, and mounting the horse, facing the tail, was going out. The King asked him why he acted in that manner.

"Sire," said the Wag, "simply to see if your officers were coming behind, that I may at once

hand over the bundle to them and go about my business."

The Despot was abashed, and stopped giving any more presents, saying: "*Giving is but giving in vain, when we give to take again.*"

The Crane and the Fool

In the East there lived a Fool, who went one day to his fields and said: "I sowed a month ago; should the crops stand two months more, I shall get three hundred bushels of corn. But I am in a hurry, so if I should reap now, I dare say I shall have one hundred bushels at least."

A Crane who heard his words said: "If I were you, I should have all the three hundred bushels this very day."

"How?" said the Fool.

"Why," said the Crane, "you stored up water in the tank to feed the crops for three months. A month has elapsed, so water enough for two months more remains in the tank. Should you open the sluices and let all the water flow into the fields, you will have all the corn at once."

"Are you sure I shall have all the corn at once?" said the Fool.

"Oh, yes," said the Crane, "there is not

the slightest doubt. My geographical knowledge is extensive, for I have travelled over a great part of the world; so you may depend on my wide knowledge and experience."

The Fool then let all the water flow into the fields. The Crane invited his kindred, and they together ate all the big fish left in the tank first, and then, hovering over the fields, picked up all the small fish that had gone out with the water. A great portion of the crops was swept away; what remained was soon buried in the mud.

The Fool sat on the bank of the lake and wept, saying: "The Crane's geography ruined me."

"My friend," said the Crane, "my geography was as good as your arithmetic. *It is all the same whether you fall into the ditch from this side or that!*"

The Lion and the Goat

A Lion was eating up one after another the animals of a certain country. One day an old Goat said: "We must put a stop to this. I have a plan by which he may be sent away from this part of the country."

"Pray act up to it at once," said the other animals.

The old Goat laid himself down in a cave on the roadside, with his flowing beard and long curved horns. The Lion on his way to the village saw him, and stopped at the mouth of the cave.

"So you have come, after all," said the Goat.

"What do you mean?" asked the Lion.

"Why, I have long been lying in this cave. I have eaten up one hundred elephants, a hundred tigers, a thousand wolves, and ninety-nine lions. One more lion has been wanting. I have waited long and patiently. Heaven has, after all, been kind to me," said the Goat, and shook his horns and his beard, and made a start as if he were about to spring upon the Lion.

The latter said to himself: "This animal looks like a Goat, but it does not talk like one, so it is very likely some wicked spirit in this shape. Prudence often serves us better than valour, so for the present I shall return to the wood," and he turned back.

The Goat rose up and, advancing to the mouth of the cave, said, "Will you come back to-morrow?"

"Never again," said the Lion.

"Do you think I shall be able to see you, at least, in the wood to-morrow?"

"Neither in the wood, nor in this neighbourhood any more," said the Lion, and running to the forest, soon left it with his kindred.

The animals in the country, not hearing him roar any more, gathered around the Goat, and said: "*The wisdom of one doth save a host.*"

The Man and His Piece of Cloth

A Man in the East, where they do not require as much clothing as in colder climates, gave up all worldly concerns and retired to a wood, where he built a hut and lived in it.

His only clothing was a Piece of Cloth which he wore round his waist. But, as ill-luck would have it, rats were plentiful in the wood, so he had to keep a cat. The cat required milk to feed it, so a cow had to be kept. The cow required tending, so a cowboy was employed. The boy required a house to live in, so a house was built for him. To look after the house, a maid had to be engaged. To provide company for the maid, a few more houses had to be built, and people invited to live in them. In this manner a little township sprang up.

The man said: "*The farther we seek to go from the world and its cares, the more they multiply!*"

The Tiger, the Fox, and the Hunters

A Fox was once caught in a trap. A hungry Tiger saw him and said, "So you are here!"

"Only on your account," said the Fox, in a whisper.

"How so?" said the Tiger.

"Why, you were complaining you could not get men to eat, so I got into this net to-day, that you may have the men when they come to take me," said the Fox, and gave a hint that if the Tiger would wait a while in a thicket close by, he would point out the men to him.

"May I depend upon your word?" said the Tiger.

"Certainly," said the Fox.

The hunters came, and, seeing the Fox in the net, said: "So you are here!"

"Only on your account," said the Fox, in a whisper.

"How so?" said the men.

"Why, you were complaining you could not get at the Tiger that has been devouring your cattle. I got into this net to-day that you may have him. As I expected, he came to eat me up, and is in yonder thicket," said the Fox, and gave a hint that if they would take him out of the trap he would point out the Tiger.

"May we depend upon your word?" said the men.

"Certainly," said the Fox, while the men went with him in a circle to see that he did not escape.

Then the Fox said to the Tiger and the men: "Sir Tiger, here are the men; gentlemen, here is the Tiger."

The men left the Fox and turned to the Tiger. The former beat a hasty retreat to the wood, saying, "I have kept my promise to both; now you may settle it between yourselves."

The Tiger exclaimed, when it was too late: "*Alas! what art for a double part?*"

The Hare and the Pig

A HARE and a Pig once agreed to leap over a ditch. The Hare went a great way, and fell into it, just short by an inch. The Pig went some way and fell into it; but far behind the Hare. Yet they were eager to know which of them leapt more, and was therefore the better animal.

So they said to a Fox, who had been watching the race: "Will you tell us which of us is superior, and which inferior, in the race?"

The Fox said: "*Both in the ditch: can't say which!*"

"'WHY, WAS IT NOT FOOLISH OF ME TO COUNT THE STARS IN THE SKY, WHEN I COULD HAVE COUNTED THE STARS IN YOUR BRILLIANT PLUMAGE TO BETTER ADVANTAGE?' SAID THE FOX"

The Peacock and the Fox

A Fox, who had an eye on a Peacock, was one day standing in a field with his face turned up to the sky.

"Reynard," said the Peacock, "what have you been doing?"

"Oh, I have been counting the stars," said the Fox.

"How many are they?" said the Peacock.

"About as many as the fools on earth," said the Fox.

"But which do you think is the greater, the number of the stars or of the fools?" asked the Peacock.

"If you put it so, I should say the fools are more by one," said the Fox.

"Who is that one?" said the Peacock.

"Why, my own silly self!" said the Fox.

"How are you silly, Reynard?" questioned the Peacock.

"Why, was it not foolish of me to count the stars in the sky, when I could have counted the stars in your brilliant plumage to better advantage?" said the Fox.

"No, Reynard," said the Peacock, "therein is not your folly — although there is neither wit nor wisdom in your prattle — but in the

thought that your fine words would make an easy prey of me!"

The Fox quietly left the place, saying: "*The Knave that hath been found out cannot have legs too quick.*"

The Tiger and the Giraffe

A Tiger, named Old Guile, who had grown weak with age, was lying under a tree by the side of a lake in quest of some animal off which he could make a meal.

A Giraffe, named Tall Stripes, who came to the lake to quench his thirst, attracted his attention, and Old Guile addressed him as follows: "Oh, what a happy day! I see there the son of my old friend Yellow Haunch, who lived in the great forest near that distant mountain."

Tall Stripes was astonished to hear the words of Old Guile, and asked him how he, a Tiger, could be the friend of his father, a Giraffe.

"I am not surprised at your question," replied Old Guile; "it is a truth known to very few indeed that the Tiger and the Giraffe belong to the same family. Just look at your skin and my own: yours is of a pale yellow colour, mine is very nearly the same; you have stripes, I have them, too. What more proofs do you want?"

Tall Stripes, who was extremely simple and guileless, believed these words, and said: "I am very happy to know that my father was your friend, and that we are of the same family. Can I do anything for you?"

Old Guile replied, "No, thank you; old as I am, I make it a point of relying on myself. Further, a great part of my time is spent in prayer and meditation; for I consider it necessary, at this age, to devote all my attention to spiritual things. It will, however, be a great gratification to me to have your company whenever you should chance to pass by this lake."

Tall Stripes acceded to this request, and was about to go on his way, when Old Guile observed; "My dear Tall Stripes, you are well aware of the instability of all earthly things. I am old and infirm, and who knows what may happen to me to-morrow. Perhaps I may not see you again; so let me do myself the pleasure of embracing you before you leave me for the present."

"Certainly," said Tall Stripes. Thereupon Old Guile rose up slowly from his seat, like one devoid of all energy, and embracing him, plunged his deadly teeth into his long neck, and stretching him on the ground made a hearty breakfast on him.

Beware of the crafty professions of the wicked.

The Man of Luck and the Man of Pluck

A KING in the East said to his Minister; "Do you believe in luck?"

"I do," said the Minister.

"Can you prove it?" said the King.

"Yes, I can," said the Minister.

So one night he tied up to the ceiling of a room a parcel containing peas mixed with diamonds, and let in two men, one of whom believed in luck and the other in human effort alone. The former quietly laid himself down on the ground; the latter after a series of efforts reached the parcel, and feeling in the dark the peas and the stones, ate the former, one by one, and threw down the latter at his companion, saying, "Here are the stones for your idleness." The man below received them in his blanket.

In the morning the king and the minister came to the room and bade each take to himself what he had got. The Man of Effort found he had nothing beyond the peas he had eaten. The Man of Luck quietly walked away with the diamonds.

The Minister said to the King: "Sire, there is such a thing as luck; but it is as rare as peas mixed with diamonds. So I would say: '*Let none hope to live by luck.*'"

The Fox and the Crabs

One day a Fox seated himself on a stone by a stream and wept aloud. The Crabs in the holes around came up to him and said: "Friend, why are you wailing so loud?"

"Alas!" said the Fox, "I have been turned by my kindred out of the wood, and do not know what to do."

"Why were you turned out?" asked the Crabs in a tone of pity.

"Because," said the Fox, sobbing, "they said they should go out to-night hunting Crabs by the stream, and I said it would be a pity to kill such pretty little creatures."

"Where will you go hereafter?" said the Crabs.

"Where I can get work," said the Fox; "for I would not go to my kindred again, come what would."

Then the Crabs held a meeting, and came to the conclusion that, as the Fox had been thrown out by his kindred on their account, they could do nothing better than engage his services to defend them. So they told the Fox of their intention. He readily consented, and spent the whole day in amusing the Crabs with all kinds of tricks.

Night came. The moon rose in full splendour.

The Fox said: "Have you ever been out for a walk in the moonlight?"

"Never, friend," said the Crabs; "we are such little creatures that we are afraid of going far from our holes."

"Oh, never mind!" said the Fox; "follow me! I can defend you against any foe."

So the Crabs followed him with pleasure. On the way the Fox told them all sorts of delightful things, and cheered them on most heartily. Having thus gone some distance, they reached a plain, where the Fox came to a stand, and made a low moan in the direction of an adjacent wood. Instantly a number of foxes came out of the wood and joined their kinsman, and all of them at once set about hunting the poor Crabs, who fled in all directions for their lives, but were soon caught and devoured.

When the banquet was over, the Foxes said to their friend: "How great thy skill and cunning!"

The heartless villain replied, with a wink: "My friends, *There is cunning in cunning.*"

The Camel and the Pig

A Camel said: "Nothing like being tall! Look how tall I am!"

A Pig, who heard these words, said: "Nothing like being short! Look how short I am!"

The Camel said: "Well, if I fail to prove the truth of what I said, I shall give up my hump."

The Pig said: "If I fail to prove the truth of what I have said, I shall give up my snout."

"Agreed!" said the Camel.

"Just so!" said the Pig.

They came to a garden, enclosed by a low wall without any opening. The Camel stood on this side the wall, and reaching the plants within by means of his long neck made a breakfast on them. Then he turned jeeringly to the Pig, who had been standing at the bottom of the wall without even a look at the good things in the garden, and said: "Now, would you be tall, or short?"

Next they came to a garden, enclosed by a high wall, with a wicket gate at one end. The Pig entered by the gate and, after having eaten his fill of the vegetables within, came out, laughing at the poor Camel, who had had to stay outside, because he was too tall to enter the garden by the gate, and said: "Now, would you be tall, or short?"

Then they thought the matter over, and came to the conclusion that the Camel should keep his hump and the Pig his snout, observing: "*Tall is good, where tall would do; if short, again, 'tis also true!*"

"He who is not possessed of such a book as will dispel many doubts, point out hidden treasures, and is, as it were, a mirror of all things, is even an ignorant man."

MALAYAN FABLES

Father "Lime-stick" and the Flower-pecker

OLD FATHER LIME-STICK once limed a tree for birds and caught a Flower-pecker. He was just about to kill and eat it when the bird cried out, "O Grandfather, surely you are not going to eat me? Why, flesh, feathers and all, I am no bigger than your thumb!" "What!" said the old man; "do you expect me then to let you go?" "Yes," said the bird, "only let me go, and I will fetch you such a talisman as never was — a Bezoar-stone as big as a cocoanut and worth at least a thousand." Said the old man, "Do you really mean it?" "Really, I do," replied the bird. "Just let me go, and I'll bring it to you." Then, on being released, he flew off and perched on a tree, and began to preen his feathers, to get rid of the bird-lime.

Presently the old man said: "Where has that bird got to? Bird, where is the Bezoar-stone you promised to bring me, the one that was worth at least a thousand?" "Out-on-you,"

was the reply, "this is really *too* ridiculous. Just think of me, with my body as big as your thumb, carrying a Bezoar-stone as big as a cocoanut! It really is too absurd. Why, have I even got the strength to lift it?" At this the old man held his peace. "Well," continued the bird, "you will gain nothing by repenting that you set me free. Only remember in future not to undertake an affair quite out of keeping with your own powers. Neither try to get your arms round a tree too big for your embrace, nor attempt to climb one higher than your strength permits you."

The Mouse-deer's Shipwreck

"Come," said the Mouse-deer to the Stump-tailed Heron, "come and sail with me to Java." So they set sail, and Friend Mouse-deer held the tiller and Friend Heron spread the sail, and the wind blew from the north. Soon however Friend Mouse-deer got drowsy, and let the boat fall out of the wind.

At this Friend Heron said: "Why does the boat fall off? How is your helm, Friend Mouse-deer?" "I was only taking a few winks," said he. "Bring her up to the wind again," said the Heron. And the Mouse-deer replied: "All right, I'm 'on the spot.'" Presently, how-

ever, he dozed again and the Heron exclaimed: "Oh, if that's to be it, you may die and be done with. I'll peck a hole in this boat of ours and you'll go to the bottom."

But the Mouse-deer said: "*Please* don't, I'm *such* a bad hand at swimming." So they sailed on. And the Mouse-deer dozed a third time. At this the Heron could contain himself no longer, and said, "Confound you, Friend Mouse-deer, for sleeping at the helm." And losing his temper he pecked a hole in the boat, and the boat let in the water and Friend Heron flew away. But the Mouse-deer swam struggling with his feet in the midst of the sea.

Presently there came up a young Shark who exclaimed, "I'll have a meal off you this time at all events." But the Mouse-deer answered, "What, Friend Shark, you'll make a meal off *me*? Why, in place of the little flesh I've got, if you'll carry me ashore, I'll teach you some excellent Magic which will save you from ever having to hunt for your food again." To this the Shark replied, "Agreed. If you'll teach me 'your excellent Magic' I'll carry you ashore." So the Mouse-deer got upon Friend Shark's back, and was carried straight ashore.

And on their arrival the Mouse-deer said: "Wait here a bit, while I go and get the

simples." And going a-land he hunted up a rattan creeper and took it back with him and said: "Now I'll give you the simples I spoke of," and bound it fast to Friend Shark's tail. And presently the Shark said: "Why have you made the line fast to my tail?" But the Mouse-deer replied: "Keep quite quiet till I have tied you up properly, and then I'll give you the simples." But presently he dragged the Shark up on to the dry beach, and made butcher's meat of him. Just then, however, a Tiger came up, exclaiming, "Here's really a good meal for Me, for once in a way!" To this, however, the Mouse-deer replied: "What is the use of eating *me*, when there's already plenty of butcher's meat and to spare?" "Very well, I'll share it with you," said the Tiger. The Mouse-deer replied, "You may share it with me by all means, if you will only go and get some water to do the cooking." So the Tiger went off to get water and presently came back with it.

"Wash the meat before you roast it," said the Mouse-deer. The Tiger took the meat and washed it in the water. "Go and fetch fire and roast it," said the Mouse-deer. The Tiger fetched fire and came back to do the cooking. And when the meat was done, "Now go and fetch some drinking water," said the Mouse-

deer, "and we'll have our meal together." So the Tiger went off again to fetch the drinking water. But the Mouse-deer in the meantime made off with the Shark's meat and climbed up with it to the top of a She-oak Tree. And presently the Tiger came back and found both Mouse-deer and meat missing. At this he exclaimed: "For once in a way, Mr. Mouse-deer, you've fairly cheated Me; if we don't meet again no matter, but if we do, I'll be the death of you." And here the story ends.

The Tiger Gets His Deserts

A Tiger which had been caught in a trap, seeing a man, begged to be released. The man said to the Tiger: "If I let you out of the trap will you promise not to attack me?" "Certainly" said the Tiger, and the man therefore let the Tiger go; but the moment the Tiger was loose it sprang upon the man and caught him. At this the man begged the Tiger to wait until he had inquired how the law stood with reference to their contract, and the Tiger agreed to do so. The man and the Tiger therefore set out together; and on coming to a Road the man said: "O Road, Road, is it lawful to requite evil for good, or good for good only?" The Road replied: "I do good to mankind, but they

requite me with evil, defiling my surface as they go." Then they came to a Tree, of which the man asked the same question. The Tree replied: "I do good to mankind, but they requite me with evil, lopping off my branches and cutting me down." At last they came to the Mouse-deer and the man made the same inquiry as before. The Mouse-deer replied: "I must really go into the question thoroughly before I answer it; let us go back together to the trap." On reaching the trap, he requested the Tiger to "Step inside," and the Tiger entering the trap, the Mouse-deer let down the door of the trap, and exclaimed, "Accursed Brute, you have returned evil for good and now you shall die for it." He then called in the neighbours and had the Tiger killed.

The Tune That Makes the Tiger Drowsy

THERE is a tune which when played upon the "Kerotong" (a two-stringed bamboo harp) makes Rimau the Tiger drowsy, but only a few old people know it. One evening two men were sitting together and playing in a hut in the jungle when two tigers overheard them.

The Tigers took counsel together, and one of them said to the other, "You shall be the

first to go into the house. Whatever you seize shall therefore be your portion, but Whatever plunges down the steps to escape shall be mine."

At this the second Tiger ascended the house-ladder and was just crouching upon the topmost rung when one of the men to amuse himself commenced to play the Tune that makes the Tiger drowsy. As soon as the Tiger heard it he began to grow sleepy, and presently fell plump down the steps to the ground, where he was seized by his companion. When he objected his companion exclaimed, "Did we not agree that Whatever plunged down the steps was to be my portion?" and, so saying, he proceeded to devour him at his leisure.

The Tiger and the Shadow

THERE was a "salt-lick" in the jungle to which all the beasts of the forest resorted, but they were greatly afraid by reason of an old Tiger which killed one of them every day. At length, therefore, P'lando' the Mouse-deer said to the Tiger, "Why not permit me to bring you a beast every day, to save you from hunting for your food?" The Tiger consented and P'lando' went off to make arrangement with the beasts. But he could not persuade any of them to go, and after three days he set off,

taking nobody with him but Kuwis the smallest of the Flying Squirrels.

On their arrival P'lando' said to the Tiger: "I could not bring you any of the other beasts because the way was blocked by a fat old Tiger with a Flying Squirrel sitting astride its muzzle." On hearing this the Tiger exclaimed, "Let us go and find it and drive it away." The three therefore set out, the Flying Squirrel perched upon the Tiger's muzzle and the Mouse-deer sitting astride upon its hind quarters. On reaching the river, the Mouse-deer pointed to the Tiger's likeness in the water and exclaimed, "Look there! That is the fat old Tiger that I saw." On hearing this, the Tiger sprang into the river to attack his own shadow, and was drowned immediately.

The King-crow and the Water-snail

A WATER-SNAIL was coming up-stream from the lower reaches, when a King-crow heard it. Said the King-crow to himself: "Who can it be coming up-stream that exclaims so loudly at the rapids? One might say it was a man, but that there is nothing to be seen." So the King-crow settled on a tree to watch, but as he could see nothing from his perch on the tree he flew down to the ground, and walked along by the

water-side. And when he thought to see some man exclaiming, he caught sight of the Water-snail.

"Hullo, you there," said he, "where do you come from?" "I come from the eddy below the rapids," said the Water-snail, "and I only want to get as far as the head-waters of this river." Said the King-crow: "Wait a bit. Suppose you go down to the river-mouth as quickly as you can and we will have a wager on it." (Now rivers are the Water-snail's domain, in which he has many comrades.)

"What is to be the stake?" asked the Water-snail. "If I am beaten I will be your slave, and look after your aroids and wild caladiums on which all Water-snails feed." Then the King-crow asked: "And what will you stake?" The Water-snail replied, "If I am beaten, the river shall be handed over to you and you shall be King of the River." But the Water-snail begged for a delay of twice seven days, saying that he felt knocked up after ascending the rapids, and the delay was granted accordingly.

Meanwhile, however, the Water-snail hunted up a great number of his friends and instructed them to conceal themselves in each of the higher reaches of the river, and to reply immediately when the King-crow challenged them.

The day arrived, and the King-crow flew off, and in each of the higher reaches the Water-snail's friends replied to the challenge, while at the river-mouth the Water-snail replied in person. So the King-crow was defeated and has ever since remained the slave of the Water-snail.

The Elephant Has a Bet with the Tiger

In the beginning Gajah the Elephant and Rimau the Tiger were sworn friends. But one day they came to a clearing and presently encountered Lotong, the long-tailed Spectacle-monkey. And when he saw the Monkey, the Elephant said, "Mr. Lotong yonder is far too noisy; let us try and shake him off; if he falls to me I am to eat you; and if he falls to you, you are to eat me — we will make a wager of it." The Tiger said, "Agreed"; and the Elephant replied, "Agreed." "Very well!" said the Tiger; "you shall try and menace him first." So the Elephant tried to menace the Monkey. "AU! AU! AU!" he trumpeted, and each time he trumpeted the Monkey was scared. But the Monkey went jumping head foremost through the branches and never fell to the ground at all.

Presently, therefore, the Tiger asked the Elephant, "Well, Friend Elephant, would you

like to try your luck again?" But the Elephant said, "No, thank you. It shall be your turn now; and if he falls to you, you shall eat me — if you really can make him fall!" Then the Tiger went and roared his longest and loudest, and shortened his body as for a spring and growled and menaced the Monkey thrice. And the Monkey leaped and fell at the Tiger's feet, for his feet and hands were paralyzed and would not grip the branches any more. Then the Tiger said: "Well, Friend Elephant, I suppose I may eat you now." But the Elephant said: "You have, I admit, won the wager; but I beg you to grant me just seven days' respite, to enable me to visit my wife and children and to make my will." The Tiger granted the request, and the Elephant went home, bellowing and sobbing every foot of the way.

Now the Elephant's wife heard the sound of her husband's voice, and said to her children, "What can be the matter with your Father that he keeps sobbing so?" And the children listened to make sure, and said, "Yes, it really is Father's voice, the sobbing, and not that of anybody else." Presently Father Elephant arrived, and Mother Elephant asked: "What were you sobbing for, Father? What have you done to

yourself?" Father Elephant replied: "I made a wager with Friend Tiger about shaking down a Monkey, and Friend Tiger beat me; I menaced the Monkey, but he did not fall; if he had fallen to me, I was to have eaten Friend Tiger, but if he fell to Friend Tiger, Friend Tiger was to eat me. I was beaten, and now Friend Tiger says he is going to eat me. So I begged leave to come home and see you, and he has given me just seven days' respite."

Now for the seven days Father Elephant kept sobbing aloud, and neither ate nor slept. And the thing came to the hearing of Friend Mouse-deer. "What can be the matter with Friend Elephant that he keeps bellowing and bellowing; neither does he sleep, so that night is turned into day, and day into night? What on earth is the matter with him? Suppose I go and see," said the Mouse-deer. Then the Mouse-deer went to see what was wrong, and asked: "What is the matter with you, Friend Elephant, that we hear you bellowing and bellowing every single day and every single night, just now, too, when the Rains are upon us? You are far too noisy."

But the Elephant said: "It is no mere empty noise, Friend Mouse-deer; I have got into a dreadful scrape." "What sort of a scrape?" inquired the Mouse-deer. "I made a wager

with Friend Tiger about shaking down a Monkey, and he beat me." "What was the stake?" asked the Mouse-deer. "The stake was that Friend Tiger might eat me if Friend Tiger frightened it down; and if I frightened it down, I might eat Friend Tiger. It fell to Friend Tiger, and now Friend Tiger wants to eat me. And my reason for not eating or sleeping any more is that I have got only just seven days' respite to go home and visit my wife and children and to make my will." Then the Mouse-deer said: "If it came to Friend Tiger's eating you, I should feel exceedingly sorrowful, exceedingly distressed; but things being only as you say, I feel neither." "If you will assist me," said the Elephant, "I will become your slave, and my descendants shall be your slaves forever." "Very well, if that is the case, I will assist you," said the Mouse-deer. "Go and look for a jar full of molasses." Friend Elephant promised to do so, and went to look for it at the house of a maker of palm-wine. The owner of the house fled for his life, and the jar fell into Friend Elephant's possession, who bore it back to the Mouse-deer.

Then Friend Mouse-deer said, "When does your promise expire?" and Friend Elephant replied, "To-morrow." So when next morning arrived they started, and the Mouse-deer said,

"Now pour the molasses over your back and let it spread and spread and run down your legs." Friend Elephant did as he was ordered. Friend Mouse-deer then instructed the Elephant as follows: "As soon as I begin to lick up the molasses on your back, bellow as loud as you can and make believe to be hurt, and writhe and wriggle this way and that."

And presently Friend Mouse-deer commenced to lick hard, and Friend Elephant writhed and wriggled and made believe to be hurt, and made a prodigious noise of trumpeting. In this way they proceeded and Friend Mouse-deer got up and sat astride upon Friend Elephant's back. And the Elephant trumpeted and trumpeted all the way till they met with Friend Tiger. At this Friend Mouse-deer exclaimed, "A single Elephant is very short commons; if I could only catch that big and fat old Tiger there, it would be just enough to satisfy my hunger."

Now when Friend Tiger heard these words of the Mouse-deer, he said to himself, "So I suppose if you catch me, you'll eat me into the bargain, will you?" And Friend Tiger stayed not a moment longer, but fled for his life, fetching very lofty bounds.

And soon he met with the Black Ape, and

"NOW WHEN FRIEND TIGER HEARD THESE WORDS OF THE MOUSE-DEER, HE SAID TO HIMSELF, 'SO I SUPPOSE IF YOU CATCH ME, YOU WILL EAT ME INTO THE BARGAIN, WILL YOU?' AND FRIEND TIGER STAYED NOT A MOMENT LONGER, BUT FLED FOR HIS LIFE"

Friend Ape asked, "Why running so hard, Friend Tiger? Why so much noise, and why, just when the Rains are upon us, too, do you go fetching such lofty bounds?" Friend Tiger replied, "What do you mean by 'so much noise'? What was the Thing that was got upon Friend Elephant's back, that had caught Friend Elephant and was devouring him so that he went writhing and wriggling for the pain of it, and the blood went streaming down in floods? Moreover the Thing that was got on Friend Elephant's back said, to my hearing, that a single Elephant was very short commons: but if It could catch a fat old Tiger like myself that would be just enough to satisfy Its hunger." Friend Ape said, "What was that Thing, Friend Tiger?" "I don't know," said the Tiger. "Ah," mused the Ape, "I wonder if it *could be* Friend Mouse-deer!" "Certainly not," said the Tiger; "why, how in the world could Friend Mouse-deer swallow *Me?* To say nothing of his not being used to meat food." "Come and let us go back again," said the Ape.

Then they went back again to find the Elephant, and first the Ape went the faster, and then the Tiger went the faster, and then the Ape got in front again. But Friend Mouse-deer sitting on Friend Elephant's back saw them

coming and shouted. "Hullo, Father Ape," said he, "this is a dog's trick indeed; you promised to bring me two tigers and you only bring me one. I refuse to accept it, Father Ape."

Now when Friend Tiger heard this, he ran off at first as fast as he could, but presently he slackened his pace and said, "It is too bad of you, Friend Ape, to try to cozen me in order to pay your own debts. For shame, Father Ape! It was only through good luck that he refused to accept me; if he had accepted, I should have been dead and done with. So now, if you come down to the ground, you shall die the death yourself, just for your trying to cheat me."

Thus the Tiger and the Ape were set at enmity, and to this day the Tiger is very wroth with the Ape for trying to cheat him. And here the story ends.

MOORISH FABLES

"While watching man in all his phases,
And seeing that, in many cases,
He acts just like the brute creation —
I've thought the lord of all these races
Of no less failings showed the traces
Than do his lieges in relation."

MOORISH FABLES

The Wagtail and the Jackal

AT A time when the animals spoke, a Wagtail laid her eggs on the ground. The little ones grew up. A Jackal and a Fox came to them. The Jackal said to the Fox:

"Swear to me tha the Wagtail owes me a pound of butter."

The Fox swore to it. The Bird began to weep. A Greyhound came to her and asked her what was the matter. She answered him:

"The Fox has calumniated me."

"Well," said the Hound, "put me in this sack of skin."

She put him in the sack. "Tie up the top well," said the Hound. When the Jackal returned she said to him,

"Come and measure out the butter."

The Jackal advanced and unfastened the sack. He saw the Hound, who stretched out his paws and said to the Fox,

"I am ill; come and measure, Fox."

The Fox approached. The Hound seized him. The Jackal said:

"Remember your false testimony."

The Wren

A WREN had built its nest on the side of a road. When the eggs were hatched, a Camel passed that way. The little Wrens saw it and said to their father when he returned from the fields:

"O papa, a gigantic animal passed by."

The Wren stretched out his foot. "As big as this, my children?"

"O papa, much bigger."

He stretched out his foot and his wing. "As big as this?"

"O papa, much bigger."

Finally he stretched out fully his feet and legs. "As big as this then?"

"Much bigger."

"That is a lie; there is no animal bigger than I am."

"Well, wait," said the little ones, "and you will see."

The Camel came back while browsing the grass of the roadside.

The Wren stretched himself out near the nest. The Camel seized the bird, which passed through its teeth safe and sound.

"Truly," he said to them, "the Camel is a gigantic animal, but I am not ashamed of myself."

On the earth it generally happens that the vain are as if they did not exist; but sooner or later a rock falls and crushes them.

Mule, Jackal, and Lion

THE Mule, the Jackal, and the Lion went in company.

"We will eat the one whose race is bad," they said to each other.

"Lion, who is your father?"

"My father is a lion, and my mother is a lioness."

"And you, Jackal, what is your father?"

"My father is a jackal, and my mother too."

"And you, Mule, what is your father?"

"My father is an ass, and my mother is a mare."

"Your race is bad; we will eat you."

He answered them: "I will consult an old man. If he says that my race is bad, you may devour me."

He went to a farrier, and said to him, "Shoe my hind feet, and make the nails stick out well."

He went back home. He called the Camel and showed him his feet, saying, "See what is written on this tablet."

"The writing is difficult to decipher," answered the Camel. "I do not understand it, for I only know three words — *outini, ouzatini, ouazakin.*"

He called the Lion, and said to him, "I do not understand these letters; I only know three words — *outini, ouzatini, ouazakin.*"

"Show it to me," said the Lion. He approached. The Mule struck him between the eyes and stretched him out level.

He who goes with a knave is betrayed by him.

AFRICAN FABLES

"The world is old, they say; I don't deny it;
But, infant still
In taste and will,
Whoe'er would teach, must gratify it."

The Hen and the Cat

A CAT arose in her house, went to a Hen and said to her: "Let us make friendship!"

The Hen replied to the Cat: "Dost thou like me for a friend?"

The Cat said, "Yes," and went away, and after having been at home for a while, she sent her child to the Hen, saying, "Go and tell the Hen to rise up early to-morrow morning, and to come and accompany me to a neighbouring town."

The child arose, went to the Hen's house and saluted her.

The Hen arose, and asked it: "Thou child of the Cat, dost thou come to me in peace?"

The Cat's child replied, "I come in peace; my mother has sent me to thee."

The Hen said to the Cat's child, "Say what thy mother has sent thee for; let me know."

After the Cat's child had told it to the Hen, it said: "I will go," and set out and went home.

When it was gone the Hen arose, called a child of hers, and said: "Go and ask the Cat at what time we shall go to the neighbouring town?" When the child had already started, she called it back again, saying, "Come back, I will tell thee something."

"The child returned, and when it had come to its mother, she said to it, "When thou goest to the Cat, open thy ears and hear well what she says, and come and tell me."

The child went to the Cat, and saluted her, and when the Cat arose and came out to it, the Hen's child was standing there. The Cat asked the Hen's child, "Why did thy mother send thee to me?"

The Hen's child said, "My mother said I must come and ask thee how early shall we go to the neighbouring town?"

The Cat said to the Hen's child, "Go and tell thy mother to arise and come at the cock-crowing; for what should eat her?"

The Hen's child returned to its mother, and said to her, "Behold I went to the Cat's place where thou sentest me, and am come back."

The Hen said to her child, "What did the Cat say? Let me hear what word she spoke?'

Her child answered and said to her, "My mother, the word which the Cat spoke is this:

'Go and tell thy mother to come to me when the cock crows, that we may go; for what should eat her'?"

Its mother, the Hen, said to her child, "My child, lie down in your house, for I have heard what the Cat said."

The child of the Hen obeyed her mother, went and lay down, and also her mother lay down. They slept their sleep until the cock crew, which when the Cat heard, she arose, got ready and waited for the Hen, thinking, "May she come that we may go!" The cock crew the second time, and the Cat looked out on the way whence the Hen was to come, thinking, "May she come that we may go!"

The Hen did not get up at home and day came on. When it became day, the Cat arose in her house, went to the Hen's home, and said to her, "Hen, thou sentest thy child to me, and asked at what time thou shouldst rise up, and I said to thy child, 'Go and tell thy mother to come when the cock crows, that we may go.' Did it not tell thee what it was told by me, that thou art still sitting at home although it has become day?"

The Hen said to the Cat, "Sister Cat, if thou wishest to have me for a friend, I must never get up in my house and come out at night."

The Cat said to the Hen, "What art thou

afraid of that thou sayest, 'I will never come out at night'? What is there in the way?"

The Hen listened to what the Cat said, got herself ready and called her children, saying, "Come and let us accompany the Cat to a neighbouring town!" All the children arose and when they had set out on their way, the Cat went before, and having gone on a little, she seized two of the children of the Hen; and the Hen saw that the cat was seizing two of her children; so she said to the Cat, "Sister Cat, we have scarcely set out on our way and dost thou seize two of my children?"

The Cat replied, "Thy two children which I took have not strength enough to walk; therefore did I take them to my bosom that we may go on."

The Hen said to the Cat, "If thou actest thus, I and thou must dissolve our friendship."

The Cat replied, "If thou wilt not have a friend, I shall let thee go home." So, as the Hen began to go home, the Cat made a bound, and seized the Hen's head, whereupon the Hen cried for help. All the people of the town heard her, arose, ran, and when they were come, the Cat was holding the Hen's head tight. When the Cat saw the people of the town, she left the Hen, ran away, and entered the forest.

There the Hen was standing and the people of the town said to her: "Foolish one, didst thou, a Hen, arise and go to befriend a Cat? If we had not heard thy screams, and come to thee, she would have killed thee and carried away all thy children into her forest."

The Hen said to the people of the town: "God bless you: you have taken me out of the Cat's mouth."

The people of the town said to her: "To-day our Lord has delivered thee, but for the future do thou no more make friendship with the Cat. The Cat is too cunning for thee: beware of the Cat in future!"

I have heard old people say, that on that day the cats and the fowls dissolved their friendship. This is finished.

The Stork and the Toad

A Stork went and laid eggs in a tree, brooded and hatched young ones. Then she left and went to seek food for her little ones; but she did not get any food, and all her little ones were crying for hunger. The Stork did not know what to do. So she arose one day, went to her friend, and said, "My friend, I am come to thee."

Her friend said: "What dost thou want that thou art come to me?"

She replied to her friend: "My children are hungry, and I have no food; therefore, am I come to thee; teach me a device!"

Her friend said to her: "Arise in the morning, go to the brook, and see whether there are Toads in it; then come back, and on the following morning go again, and lie down by the side of the brook; stretch out thy legs and thy wings, shut thine eyes, keep quite silent, and lie in one place until the Toads come out in the morning, and, after seeing thee, go home and call all their people to come, to take thee by the wing and to drag thee away. But do not thou speak to them — be perfectly quiet."

She listened to what her friend said, and at night-quiet she arose, and went to the brook, when all the Toads were singing; but as soon as they saw her, they went and hid themselves at the bottom of the water. So the Stork went home and slept, and having slept she arose up early and went back again to the brook, without being observed by the Toads; she went softly, and lay down by the side of the water, pretending to be dead, stretched out her legs, her wings, and her mouth, and shut her eyes. Thus she lay, until at break of day when one Toad arose, and, finding that it was day, came forth

and saw the Stork lying. He went back, and called all the Toads:

"Come, behold, I have seen something dead, lying at the door of our house, and when I had seen it I came back to call you."

So all the Toads arose and followed him, and having come out, they all saw a Stork lying at the door of their house; but they did not know that the Stork was more cunning than themselves. They returned home, called a council together and said: "What shall we do? Some one who came, we do not know whence, has died before the gate of our town." All their great men answered, and said, "Arise all of you, go out, drag this dead body far away, and leave it there."

So they all arose, went, and, taking the Stork by its wings and legs, dragged it away.

The Stork was cunning; she saw them without their knowing it. They sang, as they dragged her away:

"Drag her and leave her! Drag her and leave her!"

The Stork did not speak to them, as they all dragged her away, although she saw them. Now when they had carried her far away, the Stork opened her eyes, which when they saw they all began to run away. As soon as the Stork saw

that the Toads had begun to run away, she arose, and pursued them; having overtaken one, she took and swallowed it, and went on taking and swallowing them. The Toads kept running, but by the time they would have got home the Stork had swallowed them all, one by one. She had filled her bag, and then started on her way home. As soon as her children saw her, they all ran to their mother, saying, "Our mother has brought us food." When they came their mother threw all the Toads in her bag down to her children, and her children ate them, so that their hunger was appeased.

The Stork arose, went to her friend, and said:

"My friend, what thou toldest me yesterday is excellent: I went and lay down by the side of the brook, and when the Toads saw me in the morning, they thought I was dead; they came, dragged me along, and when they had carried me far away, not knowing that I was wiser than they and thinking that I was dead, I opened mine eyes to look at them; but on seeing me open mine eyes, they all began to run away. Then I arose, pursued them, and when I had overtaken one, I took and swallowed it; and when I had overtaken a second I took and swallowed it; so by the time they would have reached home I had swallowed them all, and

filled my bag with them. I brought them to my children, and when my children were around me, I threw the Toads before them out of the bag and they ate them, that their hunger was appeased."

She also thanked her friend, saying: "God bless thee; thou hast taught me an excellent device."

Thus the Stork and her friend devised a plan, and thus they were able to maintain their children while the Toads were sitting in their house.

So now, when the Toads are croaking in a brook, and they see any one come, they are all quite silent, supposing that a Stork is coming.

This fable of the Stork and Toads, which I heard, is now finished.

The Rat and the Toad

The Toad said to the Rat, "I can do more than thou."

The Rat replied to the Toad: "Thou dost not know how to run; having flung thyself anywhere thou stoppest there. This is all thy run; and wilt thou say that thou canst do more than I?"

When the Toad had heard the words of the Rat he said to him: "If, according to thy

opinion, I cannot do more than thou, thou shalt see what I will begin to do to-morrow; and if thou beginnest and doest the same, without anything happening to thee, thou canst do more than I."

The Rat agreed to the Toad's proposal, and went to see the Toad.

The Toad prepared himself, and when the sun reached about the middle, between the horizon and the zenith, the great men felt its heat, and went to sit down in the shade of a tree. The Toad on seeing this, arose, went to where the men were sitting, and passed through the midst of them. When the men observed him they said: "If you touch him, your hand will become bitter." So no one touched him, and the Toad passed through and went home.

Then the Toad said to the Rat, "Didst thou see me? Now if thou canst do what I do, arise, and begin to do it. I will see!"

The Rat, attending to what the toad said, got ready and the following morning, when the sun had gained strength and the great men had stood up and got under the shade of a tree, the Rat saw them sitting there, and went to do what the Toad had done; but when he came to where the men were sitting, and just went to pass through the midst of them, they saw him, and

they all took sticks, and sought to kill him: one man attempting to kill him with a stick, struck at him, but did not hit him well, the stick touching him only a little on the back; so he ran away to the Toad.

On his arrival the Rat said to the Toad:

"Brother Toad, as thou wentest to where the people were sitting no one said a word to thee, and thou camest home again with a sound skin; but when I went, and they saw me, just as I went to pass through them they all took sticks, and sought to kill me; and one man taking a stick and striking at me to kill me, our Lord helped me, that the stick hit me only a little on the back; so I ran away, and came to thee. I disputed with thee, thinking that I could do what thou doest: now to-day I have experienced something: to-morrow let us begin again and when I have the experience of to-morrow, I shall be able to give thee an answer."

The Toad said to the Rat: "The things of to-day are passed; to-morrow, when the great men have gone and sat down under the tree, I will get ready and when thou hast seen that, on observing me come to them and pass through the midst of them, they will not say a word to me, thou also shalt do what I did." So the Rat then went to see the Toad.

As soon as the Toad saw the great men sitting under the tree, he again began, saying to the Rat, "Look at me, as I go to the place where the great men are sitting, with a sound skin: but if, on my return from them, if thou seest the wale of a stick on any part of my body, thou hast spoken the truth, and canst do more than I."

The Toad got ready, and on coming to where the men were sitting no one said anything to him; so he passed through the midst of them, and went again to the Rat, saying: "Look at me! Look at my whole body! Canst thou see the wale of a stick? If thou seest one, then tell me of it!"

When the Rat had looked at the Toad's whole body and not seen any wale of a stick he said to the Toad:

"Brother Toad, I have looked at thy whole body, and not seen any wale of a stick: thou art right."

The Toad said to the Rat. "As thou disputest with me, and maintainest that thou canst do what I do, get up again, and go to where the great men are sitting; and if on seeing thee, these men do not say anything to thee, so that I see thee come back to me again with a sound skin, then I know that thou canst do more than I."

The Rat, attending to what the Toad said, arose, got himself ready, and when he saw the great men sitting under the tree, he went toward them; but on observing him, they said: "Here comes a Rat," and they every one took a stick, and pursued him in order to kill him; so he ran away, and as he ran, a man with a stick pursued him; saying, "I will not let this Rat escape."

The Rat ran until his strength failed him. The man pursued him with his stick, to kill him; and having come near to him, he took his stick, and struck at him, with the purpose of killing him; but the stick did not hit him, and God saved him, his time being not yet arrived, by showing him a hole into which he crept. When the man saw that he had gotten into the hole, he went back and returned home. The Rat, on seeing that the man had gone home, came again out of the hole, and went to the Toad, saying to him:

"Brother Toad, I indeed at first disputed with thee, saying that I could do more than thou; but, as for my disputing with thee, thou in truth canst do more than I: when the people saw thee, they did not say a word to thee, but when they saw me, they wished to kill me; if our Lord had not helped me and showed me a hole, they, on seeing me, would not have left, but killed me; thou surpassest me in greatness."

At that time the Rat entreated our Lord and he placed it in a hole, but the Toad he placed in the open air. The Rat does not come out by day, before any one; as to the time when it comes out at night, it stretches its head out of the hole, and when it does not see anybody it comes out to seek its food.

As for the Toad, it comes out by day and by night, at any time, whenever it likes; it comes out and goes about, not anything likes to molest it; it is bitter, no one eats it on account of its bitterness; the Toad is left alone; therefore it goes about wherever it likes.

The Rat does not come out of its hole and walk about except at night.

What the Toad and the Rat did, this I heard, and have told to thee. This fable of the Toad and the Rat is now finished.

The Lion and the Wild Dog

The Lion said to the Wild Dog that he did not fear any one in the forest except these four, viz., tree-leaves, grass, flies, and earth, and when the Wild Dog said, "There is certainly one stronger than thou," the Lion replied to the Wild Dog, "I kill the young ones of the elephant, the wild cow, and the leopard, and bring them to my children to be eaten. If I give one roar,

all the beasts of the forest tremble, every one of them, on hearing me roar· none is greater than I within this forest.

The Wild Dog said to the Lion, "As thou sayest that thou fearest not any one in this forest, so let us go and show me thy house; and I will come and call thee, in order to show thee a place where a black bird comes to eat, as soon as I shall see him again."

The Lion took the Wild Dog with him and showed him his house; and then the Wild Dog went home.

The next day, when a hunter was come to the forest the Wild Dog, on seeing him, went to the Lion's house, and said to the Lion:

"Brother Lion, come, and follow me, and I will show thee something which I have seen."

The Lion arose and followed the Wild Dog, and when they were come to where the hunter was, the hunter prepared himself: he had put on his forest garment, had sewn the bill of a long bird to his cap, and put it on his head, and he walked as a bird. The Wild Dog, seeing him, said to the Lion:

"Brother Lion, yonder is that black bird. Go and catch him, and when thou hast caught him, please give me one of his legs, for I want it for a charm."

The Lion attended to what the Wild Dog said, and went softly to where the bird was; but the Wild Dog ran back.

The Lion went, thinking, "I will kill the bird," but he did not know that on seeing him the hunter had prepared himself, and taken out his arrow; so, as he thought, "I will go and seize the bird," and was come close to the hunter, the hunter shot an arrow at the Lion and hit him. Then the Lion fell back, and having got up and fallen down three times, the arrow took effect and he felt giddy. In the same moment the hunter had disappeared[1] so that he saw him no more. Then the Lion recovered his courage and went very gently home.

On his arrival at home the Wild Dog said to him:

"Brother Lion, as thou saidst to me that thou art not afraid of any one in the world except our Lord, tree-leaves, grass, flies, and dirt, why didst thou not catch that black bird which I showed thee, and bring it to thy children?"

The Lion replied, "This man's strength is greater than mine."

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[1] This refers to the universal belief that hunters are able to render themselves invisible, in moments of danger, by the operation of charms and witchcraft.

Then the Wild Dog said again, "Thou saidst that thou fearest no one, except grass, flies, earth and tree-leaves; thou fearest, lest when thou enterest the forest, the leaves of trees should touch thee, or lest grass should touch thy body, or lest flies should sit on thy skin; thou also fearest to lie upon the bare earth, and thou fearest our Lord, who created thee: all these thou fearest, 'but not any other I fear within this forest,' thou saidst; and yet I showed thee a bird, the which thou couldst not kill, but thou leftest it, and rannest home; now tell me how this bird looks?"

The Lion answered and said to the Wild Dog: "Wild Dog, what thou saidst is true, and I believe it; a black man is something to be feared; if we do not fear a black man neither shall we fear our Lord who created us."

Now all the wild beasts which God has created hunt for their food in the forest, and eat it; but as soon as they see one black man standing, they do not stop and wait, but run away. Now the following beasts are dangerous in the forest: viz., the leopard, the lion, the wild cow, the wild dog and the hyena; but when they see a black man, they do not stop and wait. As for the dispute which the Lion and the Wild Dog had, the Wild Dog was right, and the Lion gave him

his right; then they shook hands again, and each went and ran to his own home. This fable, which I heard, respecting the Wild Dog and the Lion, is now finished.

How Sense Was Distributed

In the beginning not one of all the beasts of the forest was endowed with sense: when they saw a hunter come to them intending to kill them, they stood and looked at the hunter, and so the hunter killed them; day after day he killed them. Then our Lord sent one who put all the sense into a bag, tied it, carried it, and put it down under a large tree.

The Weasel saw the man put the bag down, and afterward went, called the Hare, and said to him:

"Brother Hare, I saw a man put something down under a tree, but as I went to take it, I could not; so let us go and if thou wilt take it I will show it to thee that thou mayest do so."

When the Weasel and the Hare had gone together to where the bag was, the Weasel said to the Hare, "Behold, here is the thing which I could not take and for which I called thee here."

But as the Hare went and attempted to take it, he could not, so he left it and went away.

"WHEN THE WEASEL AND THE HARE HAD GONE TOGETHER TO WHERE THE BAG WAS, THE WEASEL SAID TO THE HARE, 'BEHOLD, HERE IS THE THING WHICH I COULD NOT TAKE AND FOR WHICH I CALLED THEE HERE'"

When he was gone the Weasel went again to take hold of the bag, but as he attempted to take it, it was too heavy; so the Weasel did not know what to do. Then came a Pigeon, who sat upon a tree, and said something to the Weasel. The Weasel heard it say: "Lean it over and take it." And again, "Bend it and take it."

As soon as he had heard this, he dragged the bag along and thus brought it and leaned it against a tree, and caused it to stand in an inclined position; then having gone to the bottom of it, he bowed down, put his head to the bag, and as he drew the bag toward him it went upon his head; this being done, he pressed himself upon the ground, rose up and stood there. After this he went his way home, and on putting the bag down upon the ground and untying it, the Weasel saw that there was no other thing in the bag, but pure sense.

So he went and called the Hare again, and when the Hare was come, he said to him:

"Brother Hare, there was not a single other thing in that bag but pure sense: God has loved us so that to-day we have obtained sense; but do not tell it to anybody, then I will give thee a little, and what remains I will hide in my hole until some one comes and begs of me, and then I will give him also a little."

So he took one sense and gave to the Hare, saying, "If thou takest home this one sense, which I give thee, it will preserve thee. When thou sleepest by day open thy eyes; then if one comes to thee, thinking, 'I have got meat, I will take it,' and sees that thine eyes are open, he will think that thou art not asleep, will leave thee alone and go; but when thou goest and liest down without sleeping, then shut thine eyes, and if one sees thee, and sees that thine eyes are shut, when he comes close to thee, saying, 'I have got meat, I will take it,' then thou wilt see him, rise up and run away into thy forest. This one sense will be enough for thee; but what remains I will keep in mine own house." The Hare took his one sense and went home.

Now if one sees a Hare lying with his eyes open, it sleeps, but if its eyes are closed it is awake, and does not sleep. By this one sense which it has got the Hare is preserved.

The Weasel took all the sense that was left and hid it in his house. The Weasel surpasses all the beasts of the field in sense. When you see the Weasel, and say, "There the King of Sense has come out," and drive it before you, saying, "I will catch it," it runs into its hole; and if you begin to dig up the hole, it comes out behind you, and runs until you see it no more.

This is why now if one sees a Weasel, one calls it "The King of Sense."

Amongst all the beasts of the field he distributed sense only little by little, and this is what they now have.

This word, showing how sense came abroad in the world, and the meaning of which I have heard, is now finished.

What Employment Our Lord Gave to Insects

All the Insects assembled and went to our Lord to seek employment. On their arrival they said to our Lord, "Thou hast given every one his work; now give us also a work to do, that we may have something to eat."

Our Lord attended to the request of the Insects, and said to them, "Who will give notice that to-morrow all the Insects are to come?"

The Merchant-insect arose and said to our Lord, "The Cricket can give notice well."

So our Lord called the Cricket and said to him when he was come, "Go and give notice this evening, when the sun has set, that to-morrow morning all the Insects are to come to me, for I wish to see them."

The Cricket, obeying our Lord's command, went back to his house, waited until evening, until the sun set, and as soon as he had seen

the setting of the sun, he prepared and arose to give notice. So when the Cricket had given notice until midnight, our Lord sent a man to him saying: "Go and tell the Cricket, that there has been much notice, and that it is now enough; else he will have the headache." But the Cricket would not hear, he said: "If I am out they will see me." So he went into his hole, stretched only his head out, and began to give notice. The Cricket went on giving notice until the day dawned; but when it was day he became silent and stopped giving notice. Then all the Insects arose and went to the prayer-place of our Lord, the Merchant alone being left behind. To all the Insects who came first, our Lord gave their employment, which they all took and went home.

Afterward also the Merchant-insect went to our Lord, and our Lord said to him: "To all thy people who came before, I have given their work, and they are gone; now what kept thee back that thou camest to me last?"

The Merchant-insect replied to our Lord, "My bags are many and on the day when I took my bags and bound them up in my large travelling sacks to load them upon my asses, then my people left me behind and came to thee first."

Our Lord said to him: "All other employ

ments are assigned; the people who came first took them and went away; but stop, I will also give one to thee. Go, and having arrived at the entrance of the black ants, where are a great many ant-heads, when thou seest these many heads of the black ants, take them, and fill thy bags with them; then load thy bags upon thy ass, carry them to market, spread mats there, and sell them."

So the Merchant-insect obtained his employment, drove his ass, and went from our Lord, picked up ant-heads at the entrance of the black ants, loaded his ass, and went his way to the market. As he went the ass threw off the large bag. Then, he alone not being able to lift the bag, he called people, saying: "Come, be so good as to help me; let us take the sacks and load mine ass;" but not any of the people would do so. Then the little red ants came after him, and when they were come to where he was, he said to them, "Please come and help me to load mine ass". The little red Ants said to the Merchant-insect, "We will not help thee for nothing."

The Merchant-insect said to the little red Ants, "If you will not help me for nothing, then come and help me, and when I have come back from the market, I will pay you."

The littled red Ants helped him to load his ass, and the Merchant-insect drove his ass to the market, put down his sacks in the midst of the market-place, prepared the ground, spread his mat there, and having sold his ant-heads, he bought his things, and the market people began to disperse.

Then the Merchant-insect started on his way home, and as he went the little red Ants saw him, and said to him, "Father-merchant, give us what thou owest us."

The Merchant, however, refused them their due, and went on his way. Now as he went he got fever so that he sat down under a tree, tied his ass fast, and took off the sacks from his ass's back. As he sat there the fever overpowered him, and he lay down. On seeing him lying the little red Ants assembled and came to him. Now the fever was consuming the Merchant-insect's strength, and when the little red Ants saw this they assembled together and killed him.

There was one Insect who saw them kill him, and he ran to our Lord, and said to him, "All the little red Ants assembled together and killed a man in the midst of the town — that I saw it."

When our Lord heard what the Insect said he called a man and sent him, saying: "Go and

call the little red Ants which kill people and bring them to me."

The messenger arose, went, called all the little red Ants and brought them before our Lord. On seeing the little red Ants, our Lord asked them, "Why did you kill the man?" The little red Ants answered, and said to our Lord, "The reason why we killed this man is this: When he went to market and his ass had thrown off the sacks, those sacks were too heavy for him to take alone, so he called us, and when we came to him, he said to us, 'Please help me to take my large bag and load it upon mine ass, that I may go to market. When I have sold my things and come back, I will pay you.' Accordingly we helped him to load his ass; but when he had gone to market and sold all his things there, we saw him on his return home, and went to him, to ask him for what he owed us; but he refused it, drove his ass, and went homeward. However, he was only gone a little while, when he got fever, sat down under a tree, tied his ass fast, took off his sacks and laid them down; and on the same spot where he sat down, the fever overpowered him that he lay down. Then on seeing him lying we went, assembled ourselves and killed him, because he had refused what he owed us."

Our Lord gave them right.

Our Lord said to the Merchant, "Thou goest to market until thy life stands still." Our Lord said to the Cricket, "Do thou give notice whenever it is time! This is thy work."

Our Lord said to the little red Ants, "Whenever ye see any Insect unwell and lying down in a place, then go, assemble yourselves and finish it."

Now the Cricket begins to give notice as soon as it is evening and does not keep silence in his hole until the morning comes; this is its employment. The Merchant has no farm and does not do any work, but constantly goes to market; this is its employment, given to it by the Lord. Now the litle red Ants, whenever they see an Insect unwell and lying down they go and assemble themselves against that Insect, and, even if that Insect has not yet expired they finish it. This our Lord gave to the little red Ants for their employment.

I have now told thee the fable of the Insects, which I have heard of Omar Pesami. This is finished.

Man and Turtle

Let me tell of Turtle of Koka.

Man of Lubi la Suku caught a Turtle in the bush; he came with it to the village. They said: "Let us kill it!"

Some people said: "How shall we kill it?" They said: "We shall cut it with hatchets." Turtle replied, saying:

"Turtle of Koka,
And hatchet of Koka;
Hatchet not kill me a bit."

The people said: "What shall we kill him with?" Some said: "We shall kill him with stones." Turtle, fear grasped him, he said: "I am going to die." He says by mouth:

"Turtle of Koka,
And stone of Koka;
Stone will not kill me a bit."

The people said: "Let us cast him into the fire!" Turtle said:

"Turtle of Koka,
And fire of Koka;
Fire will not kill me a bit.
On my back,
It is like stone;
Not there can
Catch on fire."

The people said: "We will kill him with knives." Turtle said:

"Turtle of Koka,
And knife of Koka;
Knife will not kill me a bit."

The people said: "This fellow, how shall we do? How shall we kill him?" These said: "Let us cast him into the depth of water." Turtle said: "Woe! I shall die there! How shall I do?" The people said: "We have it! We have found the way we can kill him!"

They carry him; they arrive with him at the river. They cast him into the depth. Turtle dives; after a while he emerges. There he is swimming and singing:

"In water, in my home!
In water, in my home!"

The people said: "Oh! Turtle has fooled us. We were going to kill him with hatchets; he says, 'Hatchet will not kill me a bit.' We spoke of casting him into the water; he says, 'I am going to die.' We came; we cast him into the water; but we saved him."

This is what caused the Turtle to live in the water: the people were going to kill him; but he was shrewd.

Nianga Dia Ngenga and Leopard

Nianga dia Ngenga takes up his gun, saying: "I will go a-hunting." He has reached the bush; he has hunted; he saw not game; he says: "I will go."

When he returns home, he finds Mr. Leopard, whom they have stuck up in the fork of a tree. When he sees Nianga, he says: "Father Nianga, help me out!" Nianga says: "What has done this to thee?" He says: "Unfork me first; I shall tell thee."

Nianga took him out; he set him on the ground. He says: "Elephant has stuck me up in the fork of the tree. Sir, to whom one has given life, one gives more. I have been two days on the tree; give me a little food." Nianga says: "Where shall I find food?" He says: "Anywhere."

Nianga takes up his dog; he gives it to Mr. Leopard. Mr. Leopard ate it and said, "I am not satisfied." Nianga takes up also the other dog; he gives it to Mr. Leopard. He has eaten, says, "Still I have not enough." Nianga dia Ngenga took up his cartridge-box; he gives him it. Mr. Leopard, when he had eaten it, said, "Still I have not enough."

Hare comes; he finds them talking; says: "Why are you quarrelling?" Nianga says: "Mr. Leopard, I found him in the fork of a tree. Says he, 'Take me out!' I took him out. Says he, 'Give me to eat!' I gave him both my dogs and my cartridge-box. He says, 'Give me more to eat.' That is what we are quarrelling about."

Hare says: "Mr. Leopard, let him be again on the tree, where he was; that I may see." Mr. Leopard returns to the tree, where he was. Hare moves off to a distance; he calls Nianga. He says: "Thou, Nianga, art unwise. Mr. Leopard is a wild beast, he is wont to catch people. Thou, who didst get him out of there, he wanted to devour thee. Shoot him."

Nianga then shoots Mr. Leopard.

The end . . . "is with God."

Leopard and the Other Animals

Mr. Leopard lived. One day hunger grasps him. He says: "How shall I do? I will call all the animals in the world, saying, 'Come ye, let us have a medical consultation.' When the animals come then I may catch and eat."

He sends at once to call Deer, Antelope, Soko, Hare, and Philantomba. They gather, saying: "Why didst thou send for us?" He says: "Let us consult medicine, that we get health."

The sun is broken down. They begin the drums outside with the songs. Mr. Leopard himself is beating the drum; he is saying, saying:

"O Antelope! O Deer!
Your friend is sick;
Do not shun him!
O Antelope! O Deer!

Your friend is sick;
Do not shun him!
O Antelope! O Deer!
Your friend is sick;
Do not shun him!"

Deer says: "Chief, the drum, how art thou playing it? Bring it here; that I play it." Mr. Leopard gives him it. Deer takes the drum, says:

"Not sickness;
Wiliness holds thee
Not sickness;
Wiliness holds thee!
Not sickness;
Wiliness holds thee!"

Mr. Leopard stood up from ground, said: "Thou, Deer, knowest not how to play the drum."

The animals all then ran away, saying, "Mr. Leopard has a scheme to catch us."

Elephant and Frog

I OFTEN tell of Mr. Elephant and Mr. Frog, who were courting at one house.

One day Mr. Frog spake to the sweetheart of Mr. Elephant, saying: "Mr. Elephant is my horse." Mr. Elephant, when he came at night, then the girls tell him, saying: "Thou art the horse of Mr. Frog!"

Mr. Elephant then goes to Mr. Frog's, saying: "Didst thou tell my sweetheart that I am thy horse?" Mr. Frog says, saying: "No; I did not say so." They go together to find the sweetheart of Mr. Elephant.

On the way, Mr. Frog told Mr. Elephant, saying: "Grandfather, I have not strength to walk. Let me get up on thy back!" Mr. Elephant said: "Get up, my grandson." Mr. Frog then goes up.

When a while passed, he told Mr. Elephant: "Grandfather, I am going to fall. Let me seek small cords to bind thee in mouth." Mr. Elephant consents. Mr. Frog then does what he has asked.

When passed a little while, he told again Mr. Elephant, saying: "Let me seek a green twig to fan the mosquitoes off thee." Mr. Elephant says: "Go." He then fetches the twig.

Then, when they were about to arrive, the girls saw them, and they went to meet them with shouting, saying: "Thou, Mr. Elephant, art the horse indeed of Mr. Frog!"

Dog and the Kingship

Mr. Dog, they wanted to invest him with the kingship. They sought all the things of royalty: the cap, the sceptre, the rings, the skin

of mulkaka. The things are complete; they say: "The day has come to install."

The headmen all came in full; they sent for the players of drum and marimba; they have come. They spread coarse mats and fine mats. Where the lord is going to sit, they laid a coarse mat; they spread on it a fine mat; they set a chair on. They say: "Let the lord sit down." He sat down. The people begin to divide the victuals.

He, Mr. Dog, on seeing the breast of a fowl, greed grasped him. He stood up in haste; took the breast of the fowl; ran into the bush. The people said: "The lord, whom we are installing, has run away with the breast of the fowl into the bush!" The people separated.

Mr. Dog, who was going to be invested with the kingship, because of his thievery, the kingship he lost it.

I have told my little tale. Finished.

The Builder of Ability and the Builder of Haste

Two men called themselves one name. This one said: "I am Ndala, the builder of ability." The other one said: "I am Ndala, the builder of haste."

They say: "We will go to trade." They start;

they arrive in middle of road. A storm comes. They stop, saying: "Let us build grass-huts!"

Ndala, the builder of haste, built in haste; he entered into his hut. Ndala, the builder of ability is building carefully. The storm comes; it kills him outside. Ndala, the builder of haste escaped, because his hut was finished; it sheltered him when the storm came on.

FABLES FROM KRILOF

"Shall not my fable censure vice,
Because a Knave is over-nice?
And, lest the guilty hear and dread,
Shall not the decalogue be read?"

JOHN GAY

FABLES FROM KRILOF

The Education of the Lion

TO THE Lion, king of the forests, was given a son.

Among us, a child a year old, even if it belong to a royal family, is small and weak. But, by the time it has lived a twelve-month, a lion-cub has long ago left off its baby-clothes.

So, at the end of a year, the Lion began to consider that he must not allow his royal son to remain ignorant, that the dignity of the kingdom be not degraded, and that when the son's turn should come to govern the kingdom the nation should have no cause to reproach the father on his account.

But whom should he entreat, or compel, or induce by rewards, to instruct the czarevitch to become a czar?

The Fox is clever, but it is terribly addicted to lying, and a liar is perpetually getting into trouble. "No," thought the Lion, "the science of falsehood is not one which princes ought to study."

Should he trust him to the Mole? All who speak of that animal say that it is an extreme admirer of order and regularity; that it never takes a step till it has examined the ground before it, and that it cleans and shells with its own paws every grain of corn that comes to its table. In fact, the Mole has the reputation of being very great in small affairs; but, unfortunately, it cannot see anything at a distance. The Mole's love of order is an excellent thing for animals of its own kind, but the Lion's kingdom is considerably more extensive than a mole-run.

Should he choose the Panther? The Panther is brave and strong, and is, besides, a great master of military tactics; but the Panther knows nothing of politics, is ignorant of everything that belongs to civil affairs. A king must be a judge and a minister as well as a warrior. The Panther is good for nothing but fighting; so it, too, is unfit to educate royal children.

To be brief, not a single beast, not even the Elephant himself, who was as much esteemed in the forest as Plato used to be in Greece, seemed wise enough to satisfy the Lion.

By good fortune, or the opposite — we shall find out which — another king, the king of birds, the Eagle, an old acquaintance and friend

of the Lion, heard of that monarch's difficulty, and, wishing to do his friend a great kindness, offered to educate the young Lion himself.

The Lion felt a great weight removed from his shoulders. What could be better than a king as the tutor for a prince? So the Lion-cub was got ready, and sent off to the Eagle's court, there to learn how to govern.

And now two or three years go by. Ask whom you will, meanwhile, you hear nothing but praise of the young Lion; and all the birds scatter throughout the forests the wonderful stories of his merits.

At last the appointed time comes, and the Lion sends for his son. The prince arrives, and all the people are gathered together, great and small alike.

The king embraces his son before them all, and thus addresses him: "My beloved son, you are my only heir. I am looking forward to the grave, but you are just entering upon life. Before I make over my sceptre to you, tell me, in the presence of this assembly, what you have been taught, and in what manner you propose to make your people happy."

"Papa," exclaimed the prince, "I know what no one here knows. I can tell where each bird, from the Eagle to the Quail, can most readily

find water, on what each of them lives, and how many eggs it lays; and I can count up the wants of every bird, without missing one. Here is the certificate my tutor gave me. It was not for nothing that the birds used to say that I could pick the stars out of the sky. When you have made up your mind to transfer the kingdom to me, I will immediately begin to teach the beasts how to make nests."

On this the king and all his beasts howled aloud; the members of the council hung their heads; and, too late, the Lion perceived that the young Lion had learned nothing of what was wanted, that he was acquainted with birds only, not knowing anything of the nature of beasts, although he was destined to rule over them, and that he was destitute of that which is most requisite in kings — the knowledge of the wants of their own people and the interests of their own country.

The Pebble and the Diamond

A Diamond, which some one had lost, lay for some time on the high road. At last it happened that a merchant picked it up. By him it was offered to the king, who bought it, had it set in gold, and made it one of the ornaments of the royal crown. Having heard of

this, a Pebble began to make a fuss. The brilliant fate of the Diamond fascinated it; and, one day, seeing a Moujik passing, it besought him thus:

"Do me a kindness, fellow-countryman, and take me with you to the capital. Why should I go on suffering here in rain and mud, while our Diamond is, men say, in honour there? I don't understand why it has been treated with such respect. Side by side with me here it lay so many years; it is just such a stone as I am — my close companion. Do take me! How can one tell? If I am seen there, I too, perhaps, may be found worthy of being turned to account."

The Moujik took the stone into his lumbering cart, and conveyed it to the city. Our stone tumbled into the cart, thinking that it would soon be sitting by the side of the Diamond. But a quite different fate befell it. It really was turned to account, but only to mend a hole in the road.

The Pike and the Cat

A CONCEITED Pike took it into its head to exercise the functions of a cat. I do not know whether the Evil One had plagued it with envy, or whether, perhaps, it had grown tired of fishy

fare; but, at all events, it thought fit to ask the Cat to take it out to the chase, with the intention of catching a few mice in the warehouse. "But, my dear friend," Vaska says to the Pike, "do you understand that kind of work? Take care, gossip, that you don't incur disgrace. It isn't without reason that they say: 'The work ought to be in the master's power.'"

"Why really, gossip, what a tremendous affair it is! Mice, indeed! Why, I have been in the habit of catching perches!"

"Oh, very well. Come along!"

They went; they lay each in ambush. The Cat thoroughly enjoyed itself; made a hearty meal; then went to look after its comrade. Alas! the Pike, almost destitute of life, lay there gasping, its tail nibbled away by the mice. So the Cat, seeing that its comrade had undertaken a task quite beyond its strength, dragged it back, half dead, to its pond.

Trishka's Caftan

Trishka's caftan was out at the elbows. But why should he ponder long over it? He took to his needle, cut a quarter off each sleeve: so mended the elbows.

The caftan was all right again, only his arms

were bare for a quarter of their length. That is no great matter, but every one is always laughing at Trishka. So Trishka says:

"I'm not a fool. I'll set this affair straight also. I'll make the sleeves longer than they were before. They shall see Trishka is no mere commonplace fellow."

So he cut off the skirts of his caftan, and used them to lengthen his sleeves.

Then Trishka was happy, though he had a caftan which was as short as a waistcoat.

In a similar way I have sometimes seen other embarrassed people set straight their affairs. Take a look at them as they dash away. They have all got on Trishka's caftan.

The Elephant as Governor

An Elephant was once appointed ruler of a forest. Now it is well known that the race of elephants is endowed with great intelligence; but every family has its unworthy scion. Our Governor was as stout as the rest of his race are, but as foolish as the rest of his race are not. As to his character, he would not intentionally hurt a fly. Well, the worthy Governor becomes aware of a petition laid before him by the Sheep, stating that their skins are entirely torn off their backs by the Wolves.

"Oh, rogues!" cries the Elephant, "what a crime! Who gave you leave to plunder?"

But the Wolves say:

"Allow us to explain, O father. Did not you give us leave to take from the Sheep a trifling contribution for our pelisses in winter? It is only because they are stupid sheep that they cry out. They have only a single fleece taken from each of them, but they grumble about giving even that!"

"Well, well," says the Elephant, "take care what you do. I will not permit any one to commit injustice. As it must be so, take a fleece from each of them. But do not take from them a single hair besides."

The Quartette

The tricksy Monkey, the Goat, the Ass, and bandy-legged Mishka the Bear, determine to play a quartette. They provide themselves with the necessary pieces of music — with two fiddles, and with an alto and a counter-bass. Then they sit down on a meadow under a lime-tree, prepared to enchant the world by their skill. They work away at their fiddlesticks with a will; and they make a noise, but there is no music in it.

"Stop, brothers, stop!" cries the Monkey,

THE TRICKSY MONKEY, THE GOAT, THE ASS AND BANDY-LEGGED MISHKA THE BEAR, DETERMINE TO PLAY A QUARTETTE"

"wait a little! How can we get our music right? It's plain, you mustn't sit as you are. You, Mishka, with your counter-bass, face the alto. I will sit opposite the second fiddle. Then a different sort of music will begin: we shall set the very hills and forests dancing."

So they change places, and recommence; but the music is just as discordant as before.

"Stop a little," exclaims the Ass; "I have found out the secret. We shall be sure to play in tune if we sit in a row."

They follow its advice, and form in an orderly line. But the quartette is as unmusical as ever. Louder than before there arose among them squabbling and wrangling as to how they ought to be seated. It happened that a Nightingale came flying that way, attracted by their noise. At once they all entreated it to solve their difficulty.

"Be so kind," they say, "as to bear with us a little, in order that our quartette may come off properly. Music we have; instruments we have: tell us only how we ought to place ourselves."

But the Nightingale replies,

"To be a musician, one must have a quicker intelligence and a finer ear than you possess.

You, my friends, may place yourselves just as you like, but you will never become musicians."

Demian's Fish Soup

"NEIGHBOUR, light of mine eyes! do eat a little more!"

"Dear neighbour, I am full to the throat."

"No matter; just a little plateful. Believe me, the soup is cooked gloriously."

"But I've had three platefuls already."

"Well, what does that matter? If you like it, and it does you good, why not eat it all up? What a soup it is! How rich! It looks as if it had been sprinkled with amber. Here is a bream; there a lump of sterlet. Take a little more, dear, kind friend. Just another spoonful. Wife, come and entreat him!"

Thus does Demian feast his neighbour Phocas, not giving him a moment's breathing time.

Phocas feels the moisture trickling down his forehead. Still he takes the soup, attacks it with all the strength he has left, and somehow manages to swallow the whole of it.

"That's the sort of friend I like!" cries Demian. "I can't bear people who require pressing. But now, dear friend, take just this one little plateful more."

But, on hearing this, our poor Phocas, much

as he liked fish soup, catching hold of his cap and sash, runs away home, not once looking behind him.

Nor from that day to this has he crossed Demian's threshold.

The Wolf and Its Cub

A Wolf, which had begun to accustom its Cub to support itself by its father's profession, sent it one day to prowl about the skirts of the wood. At the same time it ordered it to give all its attention to seeing whether it would not be possible, even at the cost of sinning a little, for them both to make their breakfast or dinner at the expense of some shepherd or other. The pupil returns home, and says:

"Come along, quick! Our dinner awaits us: nothing could possibly be safer. There are sheep feeding at the foot of yon hill, each one fatter than the other. We have only to choose which to carry off and eat; and the flock is so large that it would be difficult to count it over again ——"

"Wait a minute," says the Wolf. "First of all I must know what sort of a man the shepherd of this flock is.

"It is said that he is a good one — painstaking and intelligent. But I went round the

flock on all sides, and examined the dogs: they are not at all fat, and seem to be spiritless and indolent."

"This description," says the old Wolf, "does not greatly attract me to the flock. For, decidedly, if the shepherd is good, he will not keep bad dogs about him. One might very soon get into trouble there. But come with me: I will take you to a flock where we shall be in less danger of losing our skins. Over that flock it is true that a great many dogs watch; but the shepherd is himself a fool. And where the shepherd is a fool there the dogs too are of little worth."

The Pike

An appeal to justice was made against the Pike, on the ground that it had rendered the pond uninhabitable. A whole cart-load of proofs was tendered as evidence; and the culprit, as was beseeming, was brought into court in a large tub. The judges were assembled not far off, having been set to graze in a neighbouring field. Their names are still preserved in the archives. There were two Donkeys, a couple of old Horses, and two or three Goats. The Fox also was added to their number, as assessor, in order that the business might be carried on under competent supervision.

Now, popular report said that the Pike used to supply the table of the Fox with fish. However this might be, there was no partiality among the judges; and it must also be stated that it was impossible to conceal the Pike's roguery in the affair in question. So there was no help for it. Sentence was passed, condemning the Pike to an ignominious punishment. In order to frighten others, it was to be hung from a tree.

"Respected judges," thus did the Fox begin to speak, "hanging is a trifle. I should have liked to have sentenced the culprit to such a punishment as has never been seen here among us. In order that rogues may in future live in fear, and run a terrible risk, I would drown it in the river."

"Excellent!" cry the judges, and unanimously accept the proposition.

So the Pike was flung — into the river.

The Cuckoo and the Eagle

The Eagle promoted a Cuckoo to the rank of a Nightingale. The Cuckoo, proud of its new position, seated itself proudly on an aspen, and began to exhibit its musical talents. After a time, it looks round. All the birds are flying away, some laughing at it, others abusing it.

Our Cuckoo grows angry, and hastens to the Eagle with a complaint against the birds.

"Have pity on me!" it says. "According to your command, I have been appointed Nightingale to these woods, and yet the birds dare to laugh at my singing."

"My friend," answers the Eagle, "I am a king, but I am not God. It is impossible for me to remedy the cause of your complaint. I can order a Cuckoo to be styled a Nightingale; but to make a Nightingale out of a Cuckoo — that I cannot do."

The Peasant and the Sheep

A Peasant summoned a Sheep into court, charging the poor thing with a criminal offence The judge was — the Fox.

The case was immediately in full swing. Plaintiff and defendant were equally adjured to state, point by point, and without both speaking at once, how the affair took place, and in what their proof consisted.

Says the Peasant: "On such and such a day, I missed two of my fowls early in the morning. Nothing was left of them but bones and feathers; and no one had been in the yard but the Sheep."

Then the Sheep depones that it was fast

asleep all the night in question, and it calls all its neighbours to testify that they had never known it guilty either of theft or any roguery; and besides this, it states that it never touches flesh-meat.

Here is the Fox's decision, word for word:

"The explanation of the Sheep cannot, under any circumstances, be accepted, for all rogues are notoriously clever at concealing their real designs; and it appears manifest, on due inquiry, that, on the aforesaid night, the Sheep was not separated from the fowls. Fowls are exceedingly savoury, and opportunity favoured. Therefore I decide, according to my conscience, that it is impossible that the Sheep should have forborne to eat the fowls. The Sheep shall accordingly be put to death. Its carcass shall be given to the court, and its fleece be taken by the Plaintiff."

The Elephant in Favour

Once upon a time the Elephant stood high in the good graces of the Lion. The forest immedately began to talk of the matter, and, as usual, many guesses were made as to the means by which the Elephant had gained such favour.

"It is no beauty," say the beasts to each

other, "and it is not amusing; and what habits it has! what manners!"

Says the Fox, whisking about his brush, "If it had possessed such a bushy tail as mine, I should not have wondered."

"Or, sister," says the Bear, "if it had gotten into favour on account of its claws, no one would have found the matter at all extraordinary; but it has no claws at all, as we all know well."

"Isn't it its tusks that have gotten it into favour?" thus the Ox broke in upon their conversation. "Haven't they, perhaps, been mistaken for horns."

"Is it possible," said the Ass, shaking its ears, "that you don't know how it has succeeded in making itself liked, and in becoming distinguished? Why, I have guessed the reason! If it hadn't been remarkable for its long ears, it would never in the world have gotten into favour."

The Sword-blade

The keen blade of a Sword, made of Damascus steel, which had been thrown aside on a heap of old iron, was sent to market with the other pieces of metal, and sold for a trifle to a Moujik. Now, a Moujik's ideas move in a narrow circle. He immediately set to work to

turn the blade to account. Our Moujik fitted a handle to the blade, and began to strip lime-trees in the forest with it, of the bark he wanted for shoes, while at home he unceremoniously splintered fir chips with it. Sometimes, also, he would lop off twigs with it, or small branches for mending his wattled fences, or would shape stakes with it for his garden paling. And the result was that, before the year was out, our blade was notched and rusted from one end to the other, and the children used to ride astride of it. So one day a Hedgehog, which was lying under a bench in the cottage, close by the spot where the blade had been flung, said to it:

"Tell me, what do you think of this life of yours? If there is any truth in all the fine things that are said about Damascus steel, you surely must be ashamed of having to splinter fir chips, and square stakes, and of being turned, at last, into a plaything for children."

But the Sword-blade replied:

"In the hands of a warrior, I should have been a terror to the foe; but here my special faculties are of no avail. So in this house I am turned to base uses only. But am I free to choose my employment? No, not I, but he, ought to be ashamed who could not see for what I was fit to be employed."

The Cuckoo and the Turtle-dove

A Cuckoo sat on a bough, bitterly complaining.

"Why art thou so sad, dear friend?" sympathizingly cooed the Turtle-dove to her, from a neighbouring twig. "Is it because spring has passed away from us, and love with it; that the sun has sunk lower, and that we are nearer to the winter?"

"How can I help grieving, unhappy one that I am?" replied the Cuckoo: "thou shalt thyself be the judge. This spring my love was a happy one, and, after a while, I became a mother. But my offspring utterly refused even to recognize me. Was it such a return that I expected from them? And how can I help being envious when I see how ducklings crowd around their mother — how chickens hasten to the hen when she calls to them. Just like an orphan I sit here, utterly alone, and know not what filial affection means."

"Poor thing!" says the Dove, "I pity you from my heart. As for me, though I know such things often occur, I should die outright if my dovelets did not love me. But tell me, have you already brought up your little ones? When did you find time to build a nest? I

never saw you doing anything of the kind: you were always flying and fluttering about."

"No, indeed!" says the Cuckoo. "Pretty nonsense it would have been if I had spent such fine days in sitting on a nest! That would, indeed, have been the highest pitch of stupidity! I always laid my eggs in the nests of other birds."

"Then how can you expect your little ones to care for you?" says the Turtle-dove.

The Peasant and the Horse

A PEASANT was sowing oats one day. Seeing the work go on, a young Horse began to reason about it, grumbling to himself:

"A pretty piece of work, this, for which he brings such a quantity of oats here! And yet they are all the time saying that men are wiser than we are. Can anything possibly be more foolish or ridiculous than to plough up a whole field like this in order to scatter one's oats over it afterward to no purpose. Had he given them to me, or to the bay there, or had he even thought fit to fling them to the fowls, it would have been more like business. Or even if he had hoarded them up, I should have recognized avarice in that. But to fling them uselessly away — why, that is sheer stupidity!"

Meanwhile time passed; and in the autumn the oats were garnered, and the Peasant fed this very Horse upon them all the winter.

There can be no doubt, Reader, that you do not approve of the opinions of the Horse. But from the oldest times to our own days has not man been equally audacious in criticising the designs of a Providence of whose means or ends he sees and knows nothing?

The Wolf and the Cat

A WOLF ran out of the forest into a village — not to pay a visit, but to save its life; for it trembled for its skin.

The huntsmen and a pack of hounds were after it. It would fain have rushed in through the first gateway; but there was this unfortunate circumstance against the scheme that all the gateways were closed.

The Wolf sees a Cat on a partition fence, and says pleadingly, "Vaska, my friend, tell me quickly, which of the moujiks here is the kindest, so that I may hide myself from my evil foes? Listen to the cry of the dogs and the terrible sound of the horns? All that noise is actually made in chase of me!"

"Go quickly, and ask Stefan," says Vaska, the Cat; "he is a very kind man."

"Quite true; only I have torn the skin off one of his sheep."

"Well, then, you can try Demian."

"I'm afraid he's angry with me, too; I carried off one of his kids."

"Run over there, then; Trofim lives there."

"Trofim! I should be afraid of even meeting him. Ever since the spring he has been threatening me about a lamb."

"Dear me, that's bad! But perhaps Klim will protect you."

"Oh, Vaska, I have killed one of his calves."

"What do I hear, friend? You've quarrelled with all the village," cried Vaska to the Wolf. "What sort of protection can you hope for here? No, no; our moujiks are not so destitute of sense as to be willing to save you to their own hurt. And, really, you have only yourself to blame. What you have sown, that you must now reap."

The Eagle and the Mole

An Eagle and his mate flew into a deep forest and determined to make it their permanent abode. So they chose an oak, lofty and wide-spreading, and began to build themselves a nest on the top of it, hoping there to rear their young in the summer.

A Mole, who heard about all this, plucked up courage enough to inform the Eagles that the oak was not a proper dwelling-place for them; that it was almost entirely rotten at the root, and was likely soon to fall, and that therefore the Eagles ought not to make their nest upon it.

But is it becoming that an Eagle should accept advice coming from a Mole in a hole? Where then would be the glory of an Eagle having such keen eyes? And how comes it that Moles dare to meddle in the affairs of the king of Birds?

So, saying very little to the Mole, whose counsel he despised, the Eagle set to work quickly — and the King soon got ready the new dwelling for the Queen.

All goes well, and now the Eagles have little ones. But what happens? One day, when at early dawn the Eagle is hastening back from the chase, bringing a rich breakfast to his family, as he drops down from the sky he sees — his oak has fallen, and has crushed beneath it his mate and his little ones!

"Wretched creature that I am!" he cries, anguish blotting out from him the light; "for my pride has fate so terribly punished me, and because I gave no heed to wise counsel.

But could one expect that wise counsel could possibly come from a miserable Mole?"

Then from its hole the Mole replies: "Had not you despised me, you would have remembered that I burrow within the earth, and that, as I live among the roots, I can tell with certainty whether a tree be sound or not."

The Spider and the Bee

A MERCHANT brought some linen to a fair. That's a thing everybody wants to buy, so it would have been a sin in the Merchant if he had complained of his sale. There was no keeping the buyers back: the shop was at times crammed full.

Seeing how rapidly the goods went off, an envious Spider was tempted by the Merchant's gains. She took it into her head to weave goods for sale herself, and determined to open a little shop for them in a window corner, seeking thereby to undermine the Merchant's success.

She commenced her web, spun the whole night long, and then set out her wares on view. From her shop she did not stir, but remained sitting there, puffed up with pride, and thinking, "So soon as the day shall dawn will all buyers be enticed to me."

Well, the day did dawn. But what then?

There came a broom, and the ingenious creatures and her little shop were swept clean away.

Our Spider went wild with vexation.

"There!" she cried, "what's the good of expecting a just reward? And yet I ask the whole world — Whose work is the finer, mine or that Merchant's?"

"Yours, to be sure," answered the Bee. "Who would venture to deny the fact? Every one knew that long ago. But what is the good of it if there's neither warmth nor wear in it?"

The Cuckoo and the Cock

"How proudly and sonorously you sing, my dear Cock!"

"But you, dear Cuckoo, my light, how smoothly flows your long drawn-out note! There is no such singer in all the rest of our forest."

"To you, dear friend, I could listen forever."

"And as for you, my beauty, I protest that when you are silent I scarcely know how to wait till you begin again. Where do you get such a voice? — so clear, so soft, so high! But no doubt you were always like that: not very large in stature, but in song — a nightingale."

"Thanks, friend. As for you, I declare on

my conscience you sing better than the birds in the Garden of Eden. I appeal to public opinion for a proof of this."

At this moment a Sparrow, who had overheard their conversation, said to them:

"You may go on praising each other till you are hoarse, my friends; but your music is utterly worthless."

Why was it, that, not fearing to sin, the Cuckoo praised the Cock? Simply because the Cock praised the Cuckoo.

The Peasant and the Robber

A PEASANT who was beginning to stock his little farm had bought a cow and a milk-pail at the fair, and was going quietly home by a lonely path through the forest, when he suddenly fell into the hands of a Robber. The Robber stripped him as bare as a lime-tree.

"Have mercy!" cried the Peasant. "I am utterly ruined. You have reduced me to beggary. For a whole year I have worked to buy this dear little cow. I could hardly bear to wait for this day to arrive."

"Very good," replied the Robber, touched with compassion; "Don't cry out so against me. After all, I shall not want to milk your cow; so I'll give you back your milk-pail."

FABLES FROM THE CHINESE

"Why have some more power than others? Only one knows. Why have some longer life than others? Only one knows. Why do some try and not succeed; while others do not try and yet they do succeed? Only one knows."

FABLES FROM THE CHINESE

The Animals' Peace Party

THE ancient books say that the pig is a very unclean animal and of no great use to the world or man, and one of them contains this story:

Once upon a time the Horses and Cattle gave a party. Although the Pigs were very greedy, the Horses said: "Let us invite them, and it may be we can settle our quarrels in this way and become better friends. We will call this a Peace Party.

"Generations and generations of pigs have broken through our fences, taken our food, drunk our water, and rooted up our clean green grass; but it is also true that the cattle children have hurt many young pigs.

"All this trouble and fighting is not right, and we know the Master wishes we should live at peace with one another. Do you not think it a good plan to give a Peace Party and settle this trouble?"

The Cattle said: "Who will be the leader

of our party and do the inviting? We should have a leader, both gentle and kind, to go to the Pig's home and invite them."

The next day a small and very gentle Cow was sent to invite the Pigs. As she went across to the pigs' yard, all the young ones jumped up and grunted, "What are you coming here for? Do you want to fight?"

"No, I do not want to fight," said the Cow. "I was sent here to invite you to our party. I should like to know if you will come, so that I may tell our leader."

The young Pigs and the old ones talked together and the old ones said: "The New Year feast will soon be here. Maybe they will have some good things for us to eat at the party. I think we should go."

Then the old Pigs found the best talker in all the family, and sent word by him that they would attend the party.

The day came, and the Pigs all went to the party. There were about three hundred all together.

When they arrived they saw that the leader of the cows was the most beautiful of all the herd and very kind and gentle to her guests.

After a while the leader spoke to them in a gentle voice and said to the oldest Pigs: "We

think it would be a good and pleasant thing if there were no more quarrels in this pasture.

"Will you tell your people not to break down the fences and spoil the place and eat our food? We will then agree that the oxen and horses shall not hurt your children and all the old troubles shall be forgotten from this day."

Then one young Pig stood up to talk. "All this big pasture belongs to the Master, and not to you," he said. "We cannot go to other places for food.

"The Master sends a servant to feed us, and sometimes he sends us to your yard to eat the corn and potatoes.

"The servants clean our pen every day. When summer comes, they fill the ponds with fresh water for us to bathe in.

"Now, friends, can you not see that this place and this food all belong to the Master? We eat the food and go wherever we like. We take your food only after you have finished. It would spoil on the ground if we did not do this.

"Answer this question — Do our people ever hurt your people? No; even though every year some of our children are killed by bad oxen and cows.

"What is our food? It is nothing; but our lives are worth much to us.

"Our Master never sends our people to work as he does the horses and oxen. He sends us food and allows us to play a year and a year the same, because he likes us best.

"You see the Horses and Oxen are always at work. Some pull wagons, others plough land for rice; and they must work — sick or well.

"Our people never work. Every day at happy time we play; and do you see how fat we are?

"You never see our bones. Look at the old Horses and the old Oxen. Twenty years' work and no rest!

"I tell you the Master does not honour the Horses and Oxen as he does the Pigs.

"Friends, that is all I have to say. Have you any questions to ask? Is what I have said not the truth?"

The old Cow said, "Moo, Moo," and shook her head sadly. The tired old Horses groaned, "Huh, Huh," and never spoke a word.

The leader said, "My friends, it is best not to worry about things we cannot know. We do not seem to understand our Master.

"It will soon be time for the New Year feast day; so, good night. And may the Pig people live in the world as long and happily as the

Horses and the Oxen, although our Peace Party did not succeed."

On their way home the little Pigs made a big noise, and every one said, "We, we! We win, we win!"

Then the old Horses and Oxen talked among themselves. "We are stronger, wiser, and more useful than the Pigs," they said. "Why does the Master treat us so?"

EE-SZE (Meaning): Why have some more power than others? Only one knows. Why have some longer life than others? Only one knows. Why do some try and not succeed; while others do not try and yet they do succeed? Only one knows.

The Proud Chicken

A WIDOW named Hong-Mo lived in a little house near the market place. Every year she raised many hundreds of chickens, which she sold to support herself and her two children.

Each day the Chickens went to the fields near by and hunted bugs, rice, and green things to eat.

The largest one was called the King of the Chickens, because of all the hundreds in the flock he was the strongest. And for this reason he was the leader of them all.

He led the flock to new places for food. He could crow the loudest, and as he was the strongest, none dared oppose him in any way.

One day he said to the flock, "Let us go to the other side of the mountain near the wilderness to-day, and hunt rice, wheat, corn, and wild silkworms. There is not enough food here."

But the other Chickens said, "We are afraid to go so far. There are foxes and eagles in the wilderness, and they will catch us."

The King of the Chickens said, "It is better that all the old hens and cowards stay at home."

The King's secretary said, "I do not know fear. I will go with you." Then they started away together.

When they had gone a little distance, the Secretary found a beetle, and just as he was going to swallow it, the King flew at him in great anger, saying, "Beetles are for kings, not for common chickens. Why did you not give it to me?" So they fought together, and while they were fighting, the beetle ran away and hid under the grass where he could not be found.

And the Secretary said, "I will not fight for you, neither will I go to the wilderness with you." And he went home again.

At sunset the King came home. The other Chickens had saved the best roosting place for him; but he was angry because none of

them had been willing to go to the wilderness with him, and he fought first with one and then with another.

He was a mighty warrior, and therefore none of them could stand up against him. And he pulled the feathers out of many of the flock.

At last the Chickens said, "We will not serve this king any longer. We will leave this place. If Hong-Mo will not give us another home, we will stay in the vegetable garden. We will do that two or three nights, and see if she will give us another place to live."

So the next day, when Hong-Mo waited at sunset for the Chickens to come home, the King was the only one who came.

And she asked the King, "Where are all my Chickens?"

But he was proud and angry, and said, "They are of no use in the world. I would not care if they always stayed away."

Hong-Mo answered, "You are not the only Chicken in the world. I want the others to come back. If you drive them all away, you will surely see trouble."

But the King laughed and jumped up on the fence and crowed, "Nga-Un-Gan-Yu-Na" (cock-a-doodle-doo-oo) in a loud voice. "I don't care for you! I don't care for you!"

Hong-Mo went out and called the Chickens, and she hunted long through the twilight until the dark night came, but she could not find them. The next morning early she went to the vegetable garden, and there she found her Chickens. They were glad to see her, and bowed their heads and flew to her.

Hong-Mo said, "What are you doing? Why do you children stay out here, when I have given you a good house to live in?"

The Secretary told her all about the trouble with the King.

Hong-Mo said, "Now you must be friendly to each other. Come with me, and I will bring you and your King together. We must have peace here."

When the Chickens came to where the King was he walked about, and scraped his wings on the ground, and sharpened his spurs. His people had come to make peace, and they bowed their heads and looked happy when they saw their King. But he still walked about alone and would not bow.

He said, "I am a King—always a King. Do you know that? You bow your heads and think that pleases me. But what do I care? I should not care if there was never another Chicken in the world but myself. I am King."

And he hopped up on a tree and sang some war songs. But suddenly an eagle who heard him, flew down and caught him in his talons and carried him away. And the Chickens never saw their proud, quarrelsome King again.

EE-SZE (Meaning): No position in life is so high that it gives the right to be proud and quarrelsome.

The Hen and the Chinese Mountain Turtle

FOUR hundred and fifty years ago in Lze-Cheung Province, Western China, there lived an old farmer named Ah-Po.

The young farmers all said Ah-Po knew everything. If they wanted to know when it would rain, they asked Ah-Po, and when he said: "It will not rain to-morrow," or, "You will need your bamboo-hat this time to-morrow," it was as he said. He knew all about the things of nature and how to make the earth yield best her fruits and seeds, and some said he was a prophet.

One day Ah-Po caught a fine Mountain Turtle. It was so large that it took both of Ah-Po's sons to carry it home. They tied its legs together and hung it on a strong stick, and each son put an end of the stick on his shoulder.

Ah-Po said, "We will not kill the Turtle.

He is too old to eat, and I think we will keep him and watch the rings grow around his legs each year." So they gave him a corner in the barnyard and fed him rice and water.

Ah-Po had many Chickens, and for three months the Turtle and Chickens lived in peace with each other. But one day all the young Chickens came together and laughed at the Turtle. Then they said to him, "Why do you live here so long? Why do you not go back to your own place? This small barnyard corner is not so good as your cave in the wilderness. You have only a little sand and grass to live on here. The servant feeds you, but she never gives you any wilderness fruits. You are very large, and you take up too much room. We need all the room there is here. You foolish old thing, do you think our fathers and mothers want you? No. There is not one of our people who likes you. Besides, you are not clean. You make too much dirt. The servant girl gave you this water to drink, and your water bowl is even now upside down. You scatter rice on our floor. Too many flies come here to see you, and we do not like flies."

The Turtle waited until they had all finished scolding. Then he said, "Do you think I came here myself? Who put me here, do you

know? Do you suppose I like to be in jail? You need not be jealous. I never ate any rice that belonged to you or your family. I am not living in your house. What are you complaining about? If our master should take your whole family and sell it, he would only get one piece of silver. Who and what are you to talk so much? Wait and see; some day I may have the honoured place."

Some of the Chickens went home and told their mother, "We had an argument with the Turtle to-day and he had the last word. To-morrow we want you to go with us and show him that a Chicken can argue as well as a Turtle."

The next day all the Chickens of the barnyard went to see the Turtle. And the old Hen said, "My children came here to play yesterday, and you scolded them and drove them away. You said all my family was not worth one piece of silver. You think you are worth many pieces of gold, I suppose. No one likes you. Your own master would not eat you. And the market people would never buy a thing so old and tough as you are. But I suppose you will have to stay here in our yard a thousand years or so, until you die. Then they will carry you to the wilderness and throw you into the Nobody-Knows Lake."

Then the Turtle answered and said, "I am a Mountain Turtle. I come from a wise family, and it is not easy for even man to catch me. Educated men, doctors, know that I am useful for sickness, but if all the people knew the many ways they could use me, I think there would soon be no more turtles in the world. Many Chinese know that my skin is good for skin disease, and my forefeet are good for the devil-sickness in children, as they drive the devil away; and then my shells are good for sore throat, and my stomach is good for stomach-ache, and my bones are good for tooth-ache. Do you remember that not long ago our master brought three turtle eggs to feed your children? I heard him say: 'Those little Chickens caught cold in that damp place, and so I must give them some turtle eggs.' I saw your children eat those three eggs, and in two or three days they were well.

"So you see the Turtle is a useful creature in the world, even to Chickens. Why do you not leave me in peace? As I must stay here against my will, it is not right that your children should trouble me. Sometimes they take all my rice and I go hungry, for our master will not allow me to go outside of this fence to hunt food for myself. I never come to your house and

bother you, but your children will not even let me live in peace in the little corner our master gave me. If I had a few of my own people here with me, as you have, I think you would not trouble me. But I have only myself, while you are many.

"Yesterday your children scolded me and disturbed my peace. To-day you come again; and to-morrow and many to-morrows will see generations and still more unhatched generations of Chickens coming here to scold me, I fear; for the length of life of a cackling hen is as a day to me — a Mountain Turtle. I know the heaven is large, I know the earth is large and made for all creatures alike. But you think the heavens and the earth were both made for you and your Chickens only. If you could drive me away to-day you would try to-morrow to drive the dog away, and in time you would think the master himself ought not to have enough of your earth and air to live in. This barnyard is large enough for birds, chickens, ducks, geese, and pigs. It makes our master happy to have us all here."

The Chickens went away ashamed. Talking to each other about it, they said: "The Turtle is right. It is foolish to want everything. We barnyard creatures must live at

peace with each other until we die. The barnyard is not ours; we use it only a little while."

Ee-Sze (Meaning): The Creator made the world for all to use, and, while using it, the strong should not try to drive out the weak.

The Proud Fox and the Crab

One day a Fox said to a Crab: "Crawling thing, did you ever run in all your life.

"Yes," said the Crab," I run very often from the mud to the grass and back to the river."

"Oh, shame!" said the Fox," that is no distance to run. How many feet and legs have you? I have only four. Why, if I had as many feet as you have, I would run at least six times as fast as you do. Did you know that you are really a very slow, stupid creature? Though I have only four feet I run ten times as far as you do. I never heard of any one with so many feet as you have, running so slowly."

The Crab said: "Would you like to run a race with a stupid creature like me? I will try to run as fast as you. I know I am small, so suppose we go to the scales and see how much heavier you are. As you are ten times larger than I, of course you will have to run ten times faster.

"ONE DAY A FOX SAID TO A CRAB: 'CRAWLING THING, DID YOU EVER RUN IN ALL YOUR LIFE?'"

"Another reason why you can run so fast is because you have such a fine tail and hold it so high. If you would allow me to put it down, I do not think you would run any faster than I."

"Oh, very well," said the Fox, contemptuously, "do as you like, and still the race will be so easy for me that I will not even need to try. Your many legs and your stupid head do not go very well together. Now, if I had my sense and all of your legs, no creature in the forest could outrun me. As it is, there are none that can outwit me. I am known as the sharp-witted. Even man says, 'Qui-kwat-wui-lai' (sly as a fox). So do what you will, stupid one."

"If you will let me tie your beautiful tail down so it will stay," said the Crab, "I am sure I can win the race."

"Oh, no, you cannot," said the Fox. "But I will prove to even your stupid, slow brain that it will make no difference. Now, how do you wish that I should hold my tail?"

Said the Crab: "If you will allow me to hang something on your tail to hold it down, I am sure you cannot run faster than I."

"Do as you like," said the Fox.

"Allow me to come nearer," said the Crab,

"and when I have it fastened to your tail, I will say 'Ready!' Then you are to start."

So the Crab crawled behind and caught the Fox's tail with his pincers and said, "Ready!" The Fox ran and ran until he was tired. And when he stopped, there was the Crab beside him.

"Where are you now?" said the Crab. "I thought you were to run ten times faster than I. You are not even ahead of me with all your boasting."

The Fox, panting for breath, hung his head in shame and went away where he might never see the crab again.

Ee-Sze (Meaning): A big, proud, boastful mouth is a worse thing for a man than it is for a fox.

The Mule and the Lion

One night the Lion was very hungry, but as the creatures of the wilderness knew and feared him even from afar, he could not find food. So he went to visit the young Mule that lived near the farmer's house, and when he saw him he smiled blandly and asked, "What do you eat, fair Lii, to make you so sleek and fat? What makes your hair so smooth and beautiful? I think your master gives you tender fresh grass and fat young pig to eat."

The Mule answered, "No, I am fat because I am gentle. My hair is beautiful because I do not fight with other creatures. But why do you come here, Sii? Are you hungry? I believe you are seeking for food."

The Lion said, "Oh, no, I am not hungry. I only walk around to get the cool, fresh air. And then the night is very beautiful. The moon hangs up in the clear sky with the stars and makes a soft light, and so I came to visit you. Would you not like to take a walk with me? I will take you to visit my friend, the Pig. I never go to his house alone; I always take a friend with me."

The Mule asked, "Shall we go to any other place?"

"Yes," answered the Lion, "I think we will go to visit another friend of mine who lives not far away."

Then the Mule asked his mother, "Will you allow me to go with Sii to see his friend?"

"Who is his friend?" asked the mother.

"The farmer's Pig," said the Mule.

"I think it is no harm if you go only there," said the mother Mule. "But you must not go anywhere else with Sii. The hunter is looking for him, I hear, and you must be careful. Do not trust him fully, for I fear he will tempt you

to go to some other place or into some wrong thing. If I allow you to go, you must come home before midnight. The moon will not be gone then and you can see to find your way."

So the Lion and the Mule went to visit the Pig, who lived in a house in the farmer's yard. But as soon as the Pig saw the Lion, he called out in a loud voice to his mother.

The Lion said, "He is afraid of me. I will hide and you may go in first."

When the Pig saw that the Mule was alone, he thought the Lion had gone. He opened his door wide and was very friendly to the Mule, saying, "Come in."

But the Lion jumped from his hiding place and caught the Pig as he came to the door. The Pig called to his mother in great fear, and the Mule begged the Lion, saying, "Let the poor little creature go free."

But the Lion said, "No, indeed; I have many Pigs at my house. It is better for him to go with me."

Then the Lion carried the Pig, while the Mule followed. Soon they came to where a fine looking dog lay on some hay behind a net. The Lion did not seem to see the net, for he dropped the Pig and tried to catch the Dog, who cried loudly for mercy.

But the Lion said to the foolish Mule, "See how rude the Dog is to us. We came to visit him and he makes a loud noise and tries to call the hunter so that he will drive us away. I have never been so insulted. Come here, Lii-Tsze, at once and help me!"

The Mule went to the Lion and the net fell and caught them both. At sunrise the Hunter came and found the Mule and the Lion in his net. The Mule begged earnestly and said, "Hunter, you know me and you know my mother. We are your friends and we do no wrong. Set me free, oh, hunter, set me free!"

The Hunter said, "No, I will not set you free. You may be good, but you are in bad company and must take what it brings. I will take you and the Lion both to the market place and sell you for silver. That is my right. I am a hunter. If you get in my net, that is your business. If I catch you, that is my business.

Ee-Sze (Meaning): Bad company is a dangerous thing for man or beast.

The Lion and the Mosquitoes

One day Ah-Fou's father said to him, "Come here, my boy, and I will tell you a story. Do you remember the great lion we saw one day, which Ah-Kay caught? You know a strong

rope held him, and he roared and tried to free himself until he died. Then when Ah-Kay took him from the net, he looked at the rope and the bamboo carefully, and found five of the great ropes broken.

"How strong is the lion? Twenty children like you could not break one strand of that great rope. But the lion broke five complete ropes. He is the strongest of all animals. He catches many creatures for his food, but once he lost a battle with one of the least of the wilderness creatures. Do you know what it was?"

"A bird could fight and then fly away. Was it a bird?"

"No, my son."

"A man is stronger than a lion."

"No; do you not remember the woodcutter who could put down five strong men? One night a wilderness lion caught and killed him."

"Then what was the smallest of all creatures of the wilderness that battled with a lion?"

The father said, "I will tell you the story: Once in the summer time the Lion was very thirsty. But the sun had taken all the water near the Lion's home and he went to many places seeking for it. In time he found an old

well, but the water was not fresh. As the Lion was very thirsty, he said, 'I must drink, even though the water is stale.'

"But when he reached down into the old well, he found that it was the home of all the Mosquitoes of the wilderness.

"The Mosquitoes said to the Lion, 'Go away, we do not want you. This is our home and we are happy. We do not wish the lion, the fox, or the bear to come here. You are not our friend. Why do you come?"

"The Lion roared and said, 'Weak and foolish things! I am the Lion. It is you that should go away, for I have come to drink. This is my wilderness, and I am king. Do you know, weak things, that when I come out from my place and send forth my voice, all the creatures of the wilderness shake like leaves and bow their heads to me? What are you that you should have a place you call your home and tell me that I may or I may not?'

"Then the Mosquitoes answered, 'You are only one. You speak as if you were many. Our people had this old well for a home before your roar was heard in the wilderness. And many generations of us have been born here. This home is ours, and we are they that say who shall come or go. And yet you come and

tell us to go out of our own door. If you do not leave us, we will call our people, and you shall know trouble.'

"But the Lion held his head high with pride and anger and said, 'What are you, oh, small of the small? I will kill every one of your useless people. When I drink, I will open my mouth only a little wider, and you shall be swallowed like the water. And to-morrow I shall forget that I drank to-day.'

"'Boastful one,' said the Mosquitoes, 'we do not believe that you have the power to destroy all our people. If you wish battle, we shall see. We know your name is great and that all animals bow their heads before you; but our people can kill you.'

"The Lion jumped high in his rage and said, 'No other creature in the wilderness has dared to say these things to me — the king. Have I come to the vile well of the silly Mosquitoes for wisdom?' And he held his head high, and gave the mighty roar of battle, and made ready to kill all the Mosquitoes.

"Then the Mosquitoes, big and little, flew around him. Many went into his ears, and the smallest ones went into his nose, and the big old ones went into his mouth to sting. A thousand and a thousand hung in the air just

over his head and made a great noise, and the Lion soon knew that he could not conquer.

"He roared and jumped, and two of his front feet went down into the well. The well was narrow and deep and he could not get out, for his two hind feet were in the air and his head hung downward. And as he died, he said to himself:

"'My pride and anger have brought me this fate. Had I used gentle words, the Mosquitoes might have given me water for my thirst. I was wise and strong in the wilderness, and even the greatest of the animals feared my power. But I fought with the Mosquitoes and I die — not because I have not strength to overcome, but because of the foolishness of anger."

Ee-Sze (Meaning): The wise can conquer the foolish. Power is nothing, strength is nothing. The wise, gentle and careful can always win.

FABLES OF LA FONTAINE*

"Of Fables judge not by their face;
They give the simplest brute a teacher's place.
Bare precepts were inert and tedious things;
The story gives them life and wings."

JEAN DE LA FONTAINE

*Translated by Elizur Wright, Jr.

The Grasshopper and the Ant

A GRASSHOPPER gay
Sang the summer away,
And found herself poor
By the winter's first roar.
Of meat or of bread,
Not a morsel she had!
So a-begging she went,
To her neighbour the Ant,
For the loan of some wheat,
Which would serve her to eat,
Till the season came round.
"I will pay you," she saith,
"On an animal's faith,
Double weight in the pound
Ere the harvest be bound."
The Ant is a friend —
(And here she might mend)
Little given to lend.
"How spent you the summer?"
Quoth she, looking shame
At the borrowing dame.

"Night and day to each comer
I sang, if you please."
"You sang! I'm at ease,
For 'tis plain at a glance,
Now, ma'am, you must dance."

The Swan and the Cook

The pleasures of a poultry yard
Were by a Swan and Gosling shared.
The Swan was kept there for his looks,
The thrifty Gosling for the Cooks;
The first the garden's pride, the latter
A greater favourite on the platter.
They swam the ditches, side by side,
And oft in sports aquatic vied,
Plunging, splashing far and wide,
With rivalry ne'er satisfied.
One day the Cook, named Thirsty John,
Sent for the Gosling, took the Swan,
In haste his throat to cut,
And put him in the pot.
The bird's complaint resounded
In glorious melody;
Whereat the Cook, astounded
His sad mistake to see,
Cried, "What! make soup of a musician!
Please God, I'll never set such dish on.

No, no; I'll never cut a throat
That sings so passing sweet a note."

'Tis thus, whatever peril may alarm us,
Sweet words will surely never harm us.

The Hornets and the Bees

"The artist by his work is known."
A piece of honey-comb, one day,
Discover'd as a waif and stray,
The Hornets treated as their own.
Their title did the Bees dispute,
And brought before a Wasp the suit.
The judge was puzzled to decide,
For nothing could be testified
Save that around this honey-comb
There had been seen, as if at home,
Some longish, brownish, buzzing creatures,
Much like the Bees in wings and features.
But what of that? for marks the same,
The Hornets, too, could truly claim.
Between assertion and denial,
The Wasp, in doubt, proclaim'd new trial;
And, hearing what an ant-hill swore,
Could see no clearer than before.
"What use, I pray, of this expense?"
At last exclaim'd a Bee of sense.

"We've labour'd months in this affair,
And now are only where we were.
Meanwhile the honey runs to waste:
'Tis time the judge should show some haste.
Both sides have had sufficient bleeding,
Without more fuss of scrawls and pleading.
Let's set to work, these drones and we,
And then all eyes the truth may see,
Whose art it is that can produce
The magic cells, the nectar juice."
The Hornets, flinching on their part,
Show that the work transcends their art.
The Wasp at length their title sees,
And gives the honey to the Bees.

Oh, would that suits at law with us
Might every one be managed thus!

The Two Rats, the Fox, and the Egg

Two Rats in foraging fell on an Egg —
For gentry such as they
A genteel dinner every way;
They needed not to find an ox's leg.
Brimful of joy and appetite,
They were about to sack the box,
So tight without the aid of locks,
When suddenly there came in sight
A personage — Sir Slyboots Fox.

Sure, luck was never more untoward
Since Fortune was a vixen froward!
How should they save their Egg — and bacon?
Their plunder couldn't then be bagg'd·
Should it in forward paws be taken,
Or roll'd along, or dragg'd?
Each method seem'd impossible,
And each was then of danger full.
Necessity, ingenious mother,
Brought forth what help'd them from their pother.
As still there was a chance to save their prey,
The sponger yet some hundred yards away —
One seized the Egg, and turn'd upon his back,
And then, in spite of many a thump and thwack,
That would have torn, perhaps, a coat of mail,
The other dragg'd him by the tail.
Who dares the inference to blink,
That beasts possess wherewith to think?

Were I commission'd to bestow
This power on creatures here below,
The beasts should have as much of mind
As infants of the human kind.

The Lion's Share

The Heifer, the Goat, and their sister the Sheep,
Compacted their earnings in common to keep,

'Tis said, in time past, with a Lion, who sway'd
Full lordship o'er neighbours, of whatever grade.
The Goat, as it happen'd, a Stag having snared,
Sent off to the rest, that the beast might be
shared.
All gather'd; the Lion first counts on his claws,
And says, "We'll proceed to divide with our paws
The stag into pieces, as fix'd by our laws."
This done, he announces part first as his own;
"'Tis mine," he says, "truly, as Lion alone."
To such a decision there's nought to be said,
As he who has made it is doubtless the head.
"Well, also, the second to me should belong;
'Tis mine, be it known, by the right of the strong.
Again, as the bravest, the third must be mine.
To touch but the fourth whoso maketh a sign,
I'll choke him to death
In the space of a breath!"

The Shepherd and His Dog

A Shepherd, with a single Dog,
Was ask'd the reason why
He kept a Dog, whose least supply
Amounted to a loaf of bread
For every day. The people said
He'd better give the animal
To guard the village seignior's hall;

For him, a Shepherd, it would be
A thriftier economy
To keep small curs, say two or three,
That would not cost him half the food,
And yet for watching be as good.
The fools, perhaps, forgot to tell
If they would fight the wolf as well.
The silly Shepherd, giving heed,
Cast off his Dog of mastiff breed,
And took three dogs to watch his cattle,
Which ate far less, but fled in battle.

Not vain our tale, if it convinces
Small states that 'tis a wiser thing
To trust a single powerful king,
Than half a dozen petty princes.

The Old Man and the Ass

An Old Man, riding on his Ass,
Had found a spot of thrifty grass,
And there turn'd loose his weary beast.
Old Grizzle, pleased with such a feast,
Flung up his heels, and caper'd round,
Then roll'd and rubb'd upon the ground,
And frisk'd and browsed and bray'd,
And many a clean spot made.
Arm'd men came on them as he fed:
"Let's fly!" in haste the Old Man said.

"And wherefore so?" the Ass replied;
"With heavier burdens will they ride?"
"No," said the man, already started,
"Then," cried the Ass, as he departed.
"I'll stay, and be — no matter whose;
Save you yourself, and leave me loose,
But let me tell you, ere you go
(I speak plain English, as you know),
My master is my only foe."

The Lion Going to War

The Lion had an enterprise in hand;
Held a war-council, sent his provost-marshal,
And gave the animals a call impartial —
Each, in his way, to serve his high command.
The Elephant should carry on his back
The tools of war, the mighty public pack,
And fight in elephantine way and form;
The Bear should hold himself prepared to storm;
The Fox all secret stratagems should fix;
The Monkey should amuse the foe by tricks.
"Dismiss," said one, "the blockhead Asses,
And Hares, too cowardly and fleet."
"No," said the King; "I use all classes;
Without their aid my force were incomplete.
The Ass shall be our trumpeter, to scare

Our enemy. And then the nimble Hare
Our royal bulletins shall homeward bear.'

A monarch provident and wise
Will hold his subjects all of consequence,
And know in each what talent lies.
There's nothing useless to a man of sense.

The Ass and the Lap-dog

One's native talent from its course
Cannot be turned aside by force;
But poorly apes the country clown
The polish'd manners of the town.
Their Maker chooses but a few
With power of pleasing to imbue;
Where wisely leave it we, the mass,
Unlike a certain fabled Ass,
That thought to gain his master's blessing
By jumping on him and caressing.
"What!" said the Donkey in his heart;
"Ought it to be that Puppy's part
To lead his useless life
In full companionship
With master and his wife,
While I must bear the whip?
What doth the Cur a kiss to draw
Forsooth, he only gives his paw!

If that is all there needs to please,
I'll do the thing myself, with ease."
  Possess'd with this bright notion —
His master sitting on his chair,
At leisure in the open air —
  He ambled up, with awkward motion,
And put his talents to the proof;
Upraised his bruised and batter'd hoof,
And, with an amiable mien,
His master patted on the chin,
The action gracing with a word —
The fondest bray that e'er was heard!
Oh, such caressing was there ever?
Or melody with such a quaver?
"Ho! Martin! here! a club, a club bring!"
  Out cried the master, sore offended.
So Martin gave the Ass a drubbing —
  And so the comedy was ended.

The Hare and the Partridge

A FIELD in common share
A Partridge and a Hare,
And live in peaceful state,
Till, woeful to relate!
The hunter's mingled cry
Compels the Hare to fly.
He hurries to his fort,

And spoils almost the sport
By faulting every hound
That yelps upon the ground.
At last his reeking heat
Betrays his snug retreat.
Old Tray, with philosophic nose,
Snuffs carefully, and grows
So certain, that he cries,
"The Hare is here; bow wow!"
And veteran Ranger now —
The dog that never lies —
"The Hare is gone," replies.
Alas! poor, wretched Hare,
Back comes he to his lair,
To meet destruction there!
The Partridge, void of fear,
Begins her friend to jeer: —
"You bragg'd of being fleet;
How serve you, now, your feet?"
Scarce has she ceased to speak —
The laugh yet in her beak —
When comes her turn to die,
From which she could not fly.
She thought her wings, indeed,
Enough for every need;
But in her laugh and talk,
Forgot the cruel hawk!

The Weasel in the Granary

A Weasel through a hole contrived to squeeze,
(She was recovering from disease),
Which led her to a farmer's hoard.
There lodged, her wasted form she cherish'd;
Heaven knows the lard and victuals stored
That by her gnawing perish'd!
Of which the consequence
Was sudden corpulence.
A week or so was past,
When having fully broken fast,
A noise she heard, and hurried
To find the hole by which she came,
And seem'd to find it not the same;
So round she ran, most sadly flurried;
And, coming back, thrust out her head,
Which, sticking there, she said,
"This is the hole, there can't be blunder:
What makes it now so small, I wonder,
Where, but the other day, I pass'd with ease?"
A Rat her trouble sees,
And cries, "But with an emptier belly;
You enter'd lean, and lean must sally."

The Wolf Turned Shepherd

A Wolf, whose gettings from the flocks
Began to be but few,
Bethought himself to play the fox
In character quite new.
A Shepherd's hat and coat he took,
A cudgel for a crook,
Nor e'en the pipe forgot:
And more to seem what he was not,
Himself upon his hat he wrote,
"I'm Willie, shepherd of these sheep."
His person thus complete,
His crook in upraised feet,
The impostor Willie stole upon the keep.
The proper Willie, on the grass asleep,
Slept there, indeed, profoundly,
His dog and pipe slept, also soundly;
His drowsy sheep around lay.
As for the greatest number,
Much bless'd the hypocrite their slumber
And hoped to drive away the flock,
Could he the Shepherd's voice but mock.
He thought undoubtedly he could.
He tried: the tone in which he spoke,
Loud echoing from the wood,
The plot and slumber broke;
Sheep, dog, and man awoke.

The Wolf, in sorry plight,
In hampering coat bedight,
Could neither run nor fight.

There's always leakage of deceit
Which makes it never safe to cheat.
Whoever is a Wolf had better
Keep clear of hypocritic fetter.

The Lion and the Ass Hunting

The King of animals, with royal grace,
Would celebrate his birthday in the chase.
'Twas not with bow and arrows,
To slay some wretched sparrows;
The Lion hunts the wild boar of the wood,
The antlered deer and stags, the fat and good.
This time, the King, t' insure success,
Took for his aide-de-camp an Ass,
A creature of stentorian voice,
That felt much honour'd by the choice.
The Lion hid him in a proper station,
And order'd him to bray, for his vocation,
Assured that his tempestuous cry
The boldest beasts would terrify,
And cause them from their lairs to fly.
And, sooth, the horrid noise the creature made
Did strike the tenants of the wood with dread;

And, as they headlong fled,
All fell within the Lion's ambuscade.
"Has not my service glorious
Made both of us victorious?"
Cried out the much-elated Ass.
"Yes," said the Lion; "bravely bray'd!
Had I not known yourself and race,
I should have been myself afraid!"
The Donkey, had he dared,
With anger would have flared
At this retort, though justly made;
For who could suffer boasts to pass
So ill-befitting to an Ass?

The Oak and the Reed

The Oak one day address'd the Reed:
"To you ungenerous indeed
Has nature been, my humble friend,
With weakness aye obliged to bend.
The smallest bird that flits in air
Is quite too much for you to bear;
The slightest wind that wreathes the lake
Your ever-trembling head doth shake.
The while, my towering form
Dares with the mountain top
The solar blaze to stop,
And wrestle with the storm.
What seems to you the blast of death,

To me is but a zephyr's breath.
Beneath my branches had you grown,
Less suffering would your life have known,
Unhappily you oftenest show
In open air your slender form,
Along the marshes wet and low,
That fringe the kingdom of the storm.
To you, declare I must,
Dame Nature seems unjust."
Then modestly replied the Reed:
"Your pity, sir, is kind indeed,
But wholly needless for my sake.
The wildest wind that ever blew
Is safe to me compared with you.
I bend, indeed, but never break.
Thus far, I own, the hurricane
Has beat your sturdy back in vain;
But wait the end." Just at the word,
The tempest's hollow voice was heard.
The North sent forth her fiercest child,
Dark, jagged, pitiless, and wild.
The Oak, erect, endured the blow;
The Reed bow'd gracefully and low.
But, gathering up its strength once more,
In greater fury than before,
The savage blast o'erthrew, at last,
That proud, old, sky-encircled head,
Whose feet entwined the empire of the dead!

The Bat and the Two Weasels

A Blundering Bat once stuck her head
Into a wakeful Weasel's bed;
Whereat the mistress of the house,
A deadly foe of rats and mice,
Was making ready in a trice
To eat the stranger as a mouse.
"What! do you dare," she said, "to creep in
The very bed I sometimes sleep in,
Now, after all the provocation
I've suffered from your thievish nation?
It's plain to see you are a mouse,
That gnawing pest of every house,
Your special aim to do the cheese ill.
Ay, that you are, or I'm no Weasel."
"I beg your pardon," said the Bat;
"My kind is very far from that.
What! I a mouse! Who told you such a lie?
Why, ma'am, I am a bird;
And, if you doubt my word,
Just see the wings with which I fly.
Long live the mice that cleave the sky!"
These reasons had so fair a show,
The Weasel let the creature go.

By some strange fancy led,
The same wise blunderhead,

But two or three days later,
  Had chosen for her rest
  Another Weasel's nest,
This last, of birds a special hater.
New peril brought this step absurd:
  Without a moment's thought or puzzle,
  Dame Weasel, oped her peaked muzzle
To eat th' intruder as a bird.
  "Hold! do not wrong me," cried the Bat;
  "I'm truly no such thing as that.
Your eyesight strange conclusions gathers.
What makes a bird, I pray? Its feathers.
  I'm cousin of the mice and rats.
  Great Jupiter confound the cats!"
The Bat, by such adroit replying,
Twice saved herself from dying.

And many a human stranger
Thus turns his coat in danger;
And sings, as suits, where'er he goes,
"God save the king!" — or "save his foes'"

The Dove and the Ant

A Dove came to a brook to drink,
When, leaning o'er its crumbling brink,
An Ant fell in, and vainly tried,
In this, to her, an ocean tide,

To reach the land; whereat the Dove,
With every living thing in love,
Was prompt a spire of grass to throw her,
By which the Ant regain'd the shore.

A barefoot scamp, both mean and sly,
Soon after chanced this Dove to spy;
And, being arm'd with bow and arrow,
The hungry codger doubted not
The bird of Venus, in his pot,
Would make a soup before the morrow.
Just as his deadly bow he drew,
Our Ant just bit his heel.
Roused by the villain's squeal,
The Dove took timely hint, and flew
Far from the rascal's coop —
And with her flew his soup.

The Cock and the Fox

Upon a tree there mounted guard
A veteran Cock, adroit and cunning;
When to the roots a Fox up running,
Spoke thus, in tones of kind regard:
"Our quarrel, brother, 's at an end;
Henceforth I hope to live your friend;
For peace now reigns
Throughout the animal domains.

I bear the news — come down, I pray,
And give me the embrace fraternal;
And please, my brother, don't delay.
So much the tidings do concern all,
That I must spread them far to-day.
Now you and yours can take your walks
Without a fear or thought of hawks.
And should you clash with them or others,
In us you'll find the best of brothers;
For which you may, this joyful night,
Your merry bonfires light.
But, first, let's seal the bliss
With one fraternal kiss."
The Cock replied, "Upon my word,
A better thing I never heard;
And doubly I rejoice
To hear it from your voice;
There really must be something in it,
For yonder come two greyhounds, which I flatter
Myself are couriers on this very matter.
They come so fast, they'll be here in a minute.
I'll down, and all of us will seal the blessing
With general kissing and caressing."
"Adieu," said Fox; "my errand's pressing;
I'll hurry on my way,
And we'll rejoice some other day."
So off the fellow scamper'd, quick and light,

To gain the fox-holes of a neighbouring height,
Less happy in his stratagem than flight.
The Cock laugh'd sweetly in his sleeve —
'Tis doubly sweet deceiver to deceive.

The Wolf, the Goat, and the Kid

As WENT a Goat of grass to take her fill,
And browse the herbage of a distant hill,
She latch'd her door, and bid,
With matron care, her Kid;
"My daughter, as you live,
This portal don't undo
To any creature who
This watchword does not give:
'Deuce take the Wolf and all his race'!"
The Wolf was passing near the place
By chance, and heard the words with pleasure,
And laid them up as useful treasure;
And hardly need we mention,
Escaped the Goat's attention.
No sooner did he see
The matron off, than he,
With hypocritic tone and face,
Cried out before the place,
"Deuce take the Wolf and all his race!"
Not doubting thus to gain admission.
The Kid, not void of all suspicion,
Peer'd through a crack, and cried,

"Show me white paw before
You ask me to undo the door."
The Wolf could not, if he had died,
For wolves have no connection
With paws of that complexion.
So, much surprised, our gourmandiser
Retired to fast till he was wiser.

How would the Kid have been undone
Had she but trusted to the word
The Wolf by chance had overheard!
Two sureties better are than one;
And caution's worth its cost,
Though sometimes seeming lost.

The Fox, the Monkey, and the Animals

Left kingless by the lion's death,
The beasts once met, our story saith,
Some fit successor to install.
Forth from a dragon-guarded, moated place,
The crown was brought and, taken from its case,
And being tried by turns on all,
The heads of most were found too small;
Some hornéd were, and some too big;
Not one would fit the regal gear.
Forever ripe for such a rig,
The Monkey, looking very queer,
Approach'd with antics and grimaces,

And, after scores of monkey faces,
With what would seem a gracious stoop,
Pass'd through the crown as through a hoop.
The beasts, diverted with the thing,
Did homage to him as their king.
The Fox alone the vote regretted,
But yet in public never fretted.
When he his compliments had paid
To royalty, thus newly made,
"Great sire, I know a place," said he,
"Where lies conceal'd a treasure,
Which, by the right of royalty,
Should bide your royal pleasure."
The King lack'd not an appetite
For such financial pelf,
And, not to lose his royal right,
Ran straight to see it for himself.
It was a trap, and he was caught.
Said Reynard, "Would you have it thought,
You Ape, that you can fill a throne,
And guard the rights of all, alone,
Not knowing how to guard your own?"

The beasts all gather'd from the farce,
That stuff for kings is very scarce.

The Rat and the Oyster

A COUNTRY Rat of little brains,
Grown weary of inglorious rest,
Left home with all its straws and grains,
Resolved to know beyond his nest.
When peeping through the nearest fence,
"How big the world is, how immense!"
He cried; "there rise the Alps, and that
Is doubtless famous Ararat."
His mountains were the works of moles,
Or dirt thrown up in digging holes!
Some days of travel brought him where
The tide had left the Oysters bare.
Since here our traveller saw the sea,
He thought these shells the ships must be.
"My father was, in truth," said he,
"A coward, and an ignoramus;
He dared not travel: as for me,
I've seen the ships and ocean famous;
Have cross'd the deserts without drinking,
And many dangerous streams, unshrinking.'
Among the shut-up shell-fish, one
Was gaping widely at the sun;
It breathed, and drank the air's perfume,
Expanding, like a flower in bloom.
Both white and fat, its meat
Appear'd a dainty treat.

Our Rat, when he this shell espied,
Thought for his stomach to provide.
"If not mistaken in the matter,"
Said he, "no meat was ever fatter,
Or in its flavour half so fine,
As that on which to-day I dine."
Thus full of hope, the foolish chap
Thrust in his head to taste,
And felt the pinching of a trap —
The Oyster closed in haste.

Now those to whom the world is new
Are wonder-struck at every view;
And the marauder finds his match
When he is caught who thinks to catch.

The Ass and the Dog

Along the road an Ass and Dog
One master following, did jog.
Their master slept: meanwhile, the Ass
Applied his nippers to the grass,
Much pleased in such a place to stop,
Though there no thistle he could crop.
He would not be too delicate,
Nor spoil a dinner for a plate,
Which, but for that, his favourite dish,
Were all that any Ass could wish.
"My dear companion," Towser said —

"'Tis as a starving Dog I ask it —
Pray lower down your loaded basket,
And let me get a piece of bread."
No answer — not a word! — indeed,
The truth was, our Arcadian steed
Fear'd lest, for every moment's flight,
His nimble teeth should lose a bite.
At last, "I counsel you," said he, "to wait
Till master is himself awake,
Who then, unless I much mistake,
Will give his Dog the usual bait."
Meanwhile, there issued from the wood
A creature of the wolfish brood,
Himself by famine sorely pinch'd.
At sight of him the Donkey flinch'd,
And begg'd the Dog to give him aid.
The Dog budged not, but answer made,
"I counsel thee, my friend, to run,
Till master's nap is fairly done;
There can, indeed, be no mistake
That he will very soon awake;
Till then, scud off with all your might;
And should he snap you in your flight,
This ugly Wolf — why, let him feel
The greeting of your well-shod heel.
I do not doubt, at all, but that
Will be enough to lay him flat."
But ere he ceased it was too late;
The Ass had met his cruel fate.

The Monkey and the Leopard

A Monkey and a Leopard were
The rivals at a country fair.
Each advertised his own attractions.
Said one, "Good sirs, the highest place
My merit knows; for, of his grace,
The King hath seen me face to face;
And, judging by his looks and actions,
I gave the best of satisfactions.
When I am dead, 'tis plain enough,
My skin will make his royal muff.
So richly is it streak'd and spotted,
So delicately waved and dotted,
Its various beauty cannot fail to please."
And, thus invited, everybody sees;
But soon they see, and soon depart.
The Monkey's show-bill to the mart
His merits thus sets forth the while,
All in his own peculiar style:
"Come, gentlemen, I pray you, come;
In magic arts I am at home.
The whole variety in which
My neighbour boasts himself so rich
Is to his simple skin confined,
While mine is living in the mind.
For I can speak, you understand;
Can dance, and practise sleight-of-hand;

Can jump through hoops, and balance sticks;
In short, can do a thousand tricks;
One penny is my charge to you,
And, if you think the price won't do,
When you have seen, then I'll restore
Each man his money at the door."

The Ape was not to reason blind;
For who in wealth of dress can find
Such charms as dwell in wealth of mind?
One meets our ever-new desires,
The other in a moment tires.
Alas! how many lords there are,
Of mighty sway and lofty mien,
Who, like this Leopard at the fair,
Show all their talents on the skin!

The Rat and the Elephant

A Rat, of quite the smallest size,
Fix'd on an Elephant his eyes,
And jeer'd the beast of high descent
Because his feet so slowly went.
Upon his back, three stories high,
There sat, beneath a canopy,
A certain sultan of renown,
His Dog, and Cat, and wife sublime,
His parrot, servant, and his wine,
All pilgrims to a distant town.

The Rat profess'd to be amazed
That all the people stood and gazed
With wonder, as he pass'd the road,
Both at the creature and his load.
"As if," said he, "to occupy
A little more of land or sky
Made one, in view of common sense,
Of greater worth and consequence!
What see ye, men, in this parade,
That food for wonder need be made?
The bulk which makes a child afraid?
In truth, I take myself to be,
In all aspects, as good as he."
And further might have gone his vaunt;
But, darting down, the Cat
Convinced him that a Rat
Is smaller than an elephant.

The Acorn and the Pumpkin

God's works are good. This truth to prove
Around the world I need not move;
I do it by the nearest Pumpkin.
"This fruit so large, on vine so small,"
Surveying once, exclaim'd a bumpkin —
"What could He mean who made us all?
He's left this Pumpkin out of place.
If I had order'd in the case,
Upon that oak it should have hung ——

A noble fruit as ever swung
To grace a tree so firm and strong.
Indeed, it was a great mistake,
As this discovery teaches,
That I myself did not partake
His counsels whom my curate preaches.
All things had then in order come;
This Acorn, for example,
Not bigger than my thumb,
Had not disgraced a tree so ample.
The more I think, the more I wonder
To see outraged proportion's laws,
And that without the slightest cause;
God surely made an awkward blunder."
With such reflections proudly fraught,
Our sage grew tired of mighty thought,
And threw himself on Nature's lap,
Beneath an oak, to take his nap.
Plump on his nose, by lucky hap,
An Acorn fell: he waked, and in
The scarf he wore beneath his chin,
He found the cause of such a bruise
As made him different language use.
"Oh! Oh!" he cried; "I bleed! I bleed!
And this is what has done the deed!
But, truly, what had been my fate,
Had this had half a Pumpkin's weight!
I see that God had reasons good,

And all His works were understood."
Thus home he went in humbler mood.

The Cat and the Fox

The Cat and Fox, when saints were all the rage
Together went upon pilgrimage.
Our Pilgrims, as a thing of course,
Disputed till their throats were hoarse.
  Then, dropping to a lower tone,
They talk'd of this, and talk'd of that,
Till Reynard whisper'd to the Cat,
  "You think yourself a knowing one:
How many cunning tricks have you?
For I've a hundred, old and new,
All ready in my haversack."
The Cat replied, "I do not lack,
  Though with but one provided;
And, truth to honour, for that matter,
I hold it than a thousand better."
  In fresh dispute they sided;
And loudly were they at it, when
Approach'd a mob of dogs and men.
"Now," said the Cat, "your tricks ransack,
And put your cunning brains to rack,
One life to save; I'll show you mine —
A trick, you see, for saving nine."
With that, she climb'd a lofty pine.

The Fox his hundred ruses tried,
  And yet no safety found.
A hundred times he falsified.
  The nose of every hound
Was here, and there, and everywhere,
  Above, and under ground;
But yet to stop he did not dare,
Pent in a hole, it was no joke,
To meet the terriers or the smoke.
So, leaping into upper air,
He met two dogs, that choked him there.

Expedients may be too many,
  Consuming time to choose and try.
On one, but that as good as any,
  'Tis best in danger to rely.

The City Rat and the Country Rat

A CITY Rat, one night
  Did with a civil stoop
A Country Rat invite
  To end a turtle soup.

Upon a Turkey carpet
  They found the table spread,
And sure I need not harp it
  How well the fellows fed.

The entertainment was
A truly noble one;
But some unlucky cause
Disturbed it when begun

It was a slight rat-tat,
That put their joys to rout;
Out ran the City Rat;
His guest, too, scampered out.

Our rats but fairly quit,
The fearful knocking ceased,
"Return we," said the cit,
"To finish there our feast."

"No," said the Rustic Rat;
"To-morrow dine with me.
I'm not offended at
Your feast so grand and free,

For I've no fare resembling;
But then I eat at leisure,
And would not swap for pleasure
So mixed with fear and trembling.

The Ploughman and His Sons

A WEALTHY Ploughman drawing near his end
Call'd in his Sons apart from every friend,

And said, "When of your sire bereft,
The heritage our fathers left
Guard well, nor sell a single field.
A treasure in it is conceal'd:
The place, precisely, I don't know,
But industry will serve to show.
The harvest past, Time's forelock take,
And search with plough, and spade, and rake;
Turn over every inch of sod,
Nor leave unsearch'd a single clod."
The father died. The Sons in vain —
Turn'd o'er the soil, and o'er again;
That year their acres bore
More grain than e'er before.
Though hidden money found they none,
Yet had their Father wisely done,
To show by such a measure
That toil itself is treasure.

The farmer's patient care and toil
Are oftener wanting than the soil.

The Fox, the Wolf, and the Horse

A Fox, though young, by no means raw,
Had seen a Horse, the first he ever saw:
"Ho! neighbour Wolf," said he to one quite green,

"A creature in our meadow I have seen —
Sleek, grand! I seem to see him yet —
The finest beast I ever met."
"Is he a stouter one than we?"
The Wolf demanded, eagerly;
"Some picture of him let me see."
"If I could paint," said Fox, "I should delight
T' anticipate your pleasure at the sight;
But come; who knows? perhaps it is a prey
By fortune offer'd in our way."
They went. The Horse, turn'd loose to graze,
Not liking much their looks and ways,
Was just about to gallop off.
"Sir," said the Fox, "your humble servants, we
Make bold to ask you what your name may be."
The Horse, an animal with brains enough,
Replied, "Sirs, you yourselves may read my name;
My shoer round my heel hath writ the same."
The Fox excus'd himself for want of knowledge:
"Me, sir, my parents did not educate,
So poor, a hole was their entire estate.
My friend, the Wolf, however, taught at college,
Could read it, were it even Greek."
The Wolf, to flattery weak,
Approach'd to verify the boast;
For which four teeth he lost.
The high raised hoof came down with such a blow

As laid him bleeding on the ground full low.
"My brother," said the Fox, "this shows how just
What once was taught me by a fox of wit —
Which on thy jaws this animal hath writ —
'All unknown things the wise mistrust.'"

The Woodman and Mercury

A Man that labour'd in the wood
Had lost his honest livelihood;
That is to say,
His axe was gone astray.
He had no tools to spare;
This wholly earn'd his fare.
Without a hope beside,
He sat him down and cried,
"Alas, my axe! where can it be?
O Jove! but send it back to me,
And it shall strike good blows for thee."
His prayer in high Olympus heard,
Swift Mercury started at the word.
"Your axe must not be lost," said he:
"Now, will you know it when you see?
An axe I found upon the road."
With that an axe of gold he show'd.
"Is't this?" The Woodman answer'd, "Nay."
An axe of silver, bright and gay,
Refused the honest Woodman too.

At last the finder brought to view
An axe of iron, steel, and wood.
"That's mine," he said, in joyful mood;
"With that I'll quite contented be."
The god replied, "I give the three,
As due reward of honesty."
This luck when neighbouring choppers knew,
They lost their axes, not a few,
And sent their prayers to Jupiter
So fast, he knew not which to hear.
His wingèd son, however, sent
With gold and silver axes, went.
Each would have thought himself a fool
Not to have own'd the richest tool.
But Mercury promptly gave, instead
Of it, a blow upon the head.

With simple truth to be contented,
Is surest not to be repented:
But still there are who would
With evil trap the good,
Whose cunning is but stupid,
For Jove is never dupèd.

The Eagle and the Owl

The Eagle and the Owl, resolved to cease
Their war, embraced in pledge of peace.
On faith of King, on faith of Owl, they swore

That they would eat each other's chicks no more.
"But know you mine?" said Wisdom's bird.
"Not I, indeed," the Eagle cried.
"The worse for that," the Owl replied:
"I fear your oath's a useless word;
I fear that you, as king, will not
Consider duly who or what:
Adieu, my young, if you should meet them!"
"Describe them, then, and I'll not eat them,"
The Eagle said. The Owl replied:
"My little ones, I say with pride,
For grace of form cannot be match'd —
The prettiest birds that e'er were hatch'd;
By this you cannot fail to know them;
'Tis needless, therefore, that I show them."
At length God gives the Owl some heirs,
And while at early eve abroad he fares,
In quest of birds and mice for food,
Our Eagle haply spies the brood,
As on some craggy rock they sprawl,
Or nestle in some ruined wall,
(But which it matters not at all,)
And thinks them ugly little frights,
Grim, sad, with voice like shrieking sprites.
"These chicks," says he, "with looks almost infernal,
Can't be the darlings of our friend nocturnal.
I'll sup of them." And so he did, not slightly:

He never sups, if he can help it, lightly.
The Owl return'd; and, sad, he found
Nought left but claws upon the ground.
He pray'd the gods above and gods below
To smite the brigand who had caused his woe.
Quoth one, "On you alone the blame must fall;
Thinking your like the loveliest of all,
You told the Eagle of your young ones' graces;
You gave the picture of their faces:
Had it of likeness any traces?"

The Earthen Pot and the Iron Pot

An Iron Pot proposed
To an Earthen Pot a journey.
The latter was opposed,
Expressing the concern he
Had felt about the danger
Of going out a ranger.
He thought the kitchen hearth
The safest place on earth
For one so very brittle.
"For thee, who art a kettle,
And hast a tougher skin,
There's nought to keep thee in."
"I'll be thy bodyguard,"
Replied the Iron Pot;
"If anything that's hard
Should threaten thee a jot,

Between you I will go,
And save thee from the blow."
This offer him persuaded.
The Iron Pot paraded
Himself as guard and guide
Close at his cousin's side.
Now, in their tripod way,
They hobble as they may;
And eke together bolt
At every little jolt —
Which gives the crockery pain;
But presently his comrade hits
So hard, he dashes him to bits,
Before he can complain.

Take care that you associate
With equals only, lest your fate
Between these pots should find its mate.

The Wolf and the Lean Dog

A Troutling, some time since,
Endeavour'd vainly to convince
A hungry fisherman
Of his unfitness for the frying-pan.
The fisherman had reason good —
The troutling did the best he could —
Both argued for their lives.
Now, if my present purpose thrives,

I'll prop my former proposition
By building on a small addition.
A certain Wolf, in point of wit
The prudent fisher's opposite,
A Dog once finding far astray,
Prepared to take him as his prey.
The Dog his leanness plead;
"Your lordship, sure," he said,
"Cannot be very eager
To eat a dog so meagre.
To wait a little do not grudge:
The wedding of my master's only daughter
Will cause of fatted calves and fowls a slaughter;
And then, as you yourself can judge,
I cannot help becoming fatter."
The Wolf, believing, waived the matter,
And so, some days therefrom,
Return'd with sole design to see
If fat enough his Dog might be.
The rogue was now at home:
He saw the hunter through the fence.
"My friend," said he, "please wait;
I'll be with you a moment hence,
And fetch our porter of the gate."
This porter was a dog immense,
That left to wolves no future tense.
Suspicion gave our Wolf a jog —
It might not be so safely tamper'd.

"My service to your porter dog,"
Was his reply, as off he scampered.
His legs proved better than his head,
And saved him life to learn his trade.

The Ears of the Hare

Some beast with horns did gore
The Lion; and that sovereign dread,
Resolved to suffer so no more,
Straight banish'd from his realm, 'tis said,
All sorts of beasts with horns —
Rams, bulls, goats, stags, and unicorns.
Such brutes all promptly fled.
A Hare, the shadow of his ears perceiving,
Could hardly help believing
That some vile spy for horns would take them,
And food for accusation make them.
"Adieu," said he, "my neighbour cricket;
I take my foreign ticket.
My ears, should I stay here,
Will turn to horns, I fear;
And were they shorter than a bird's,
I fear the effect of words."
"These horns!" the cricket answer'd; "why,
God made them ears who can deny?"
"Yes," said the coward, "still they'll make them
horns,

And horns, perhaps, of unicorns!
In vain shall I protest,
With all the learning of the schools:
My reasons they will send to rest
In th' Hospital of Fools."

The Ass Carrying Relics

An Ass, with relics for his load,
Supposed the worship on the road
Meant for himself alone,
And took on lofty airs,
Receiving as his own
The incense and the prayers.
Some one, who saw his great mistake,
Cried, "Master Donkey, do not make
Yourself so big a fool.
Not you they worship, but your pack;
They praise the idols on your back,
And count yourself a paltry tool."

'Tis thus a brainless magistrate
Is honour'd for his robe of state.

The Two Mules

Two Mules were bearing on their backs,
One, oats; the other, silver of the tax.
The latter glorying in his load,

March'd proudly forward on the road;
And, from the jingle of his bell,
'Twas plain he liked his burden well.
But in a wild-wood glen
A band of robber men
Rush'd forth upon the twain.
Well with the silver pleased,
They by the bridle seized
The treasure Mule so vain.
Poor Mule! in struggling to repel
His ruthless foes, he fell
Stabb'd through; and with a bitter sighing,
He cried: "Is this the lot they promised me?
My humble friend from danger free,
While, weltering in my gore, I'm dying?"
"My friend," his fellow-mule replied,
"It is not well to have one's work too high.
If thou hadst been a miller's drudge, as I,
Thou wouldst not thus have died."

The Lion and the Gnat

"Go, PALTRY insect, nature's meanest brat!"
Thus said the royal Lion to the Gnat.
The Gnat declared immediate war.
"Think you," said he, "your royal name
To me worth caring for?
Think you I tremble at your power or fame?

The ox is bigger far than you;
Yet him I drive, and all his crew."
This said, as one that did no fear owe,
Himself he blew the battle charge,
Himself both trumpeter and hero.
At first he play'd about at large,
Then on the Lion's neck, at leisure, settled,
And there the royal beast full sorely nettled.
With foaming mouth, and flashing eye,
He roars. All creatures hide or fly—
Such mortal terror at
The work of one poor Gnat!
With constant change of his attack,
The snout now stinging, now the back,
And now the chambers of the nose;
The pigmy fly no mercy shows.
The Lion's rage was at its height;
His viewless foe now laugh'd outright,
When on his battle-ground he saw,
That every savage tooth and claw
Had got its proper beauty
By doing bloody duty;
Himself, the hapless Lion tore his hide,
And lash'd with sounding tail from side to side.
Ah! bootless blow, and bite, and curse!
He beat the harmless air, and worse;
For, though so fierce and stout,
By effort wearied out,

He fainted, fell, gave up the quarrel;
The Gnat retires with verdant laurel.

We often have the most to fear
From those we most despise;
Again, great risks a man may clear
Who by the smallest dies.

The Countryman and the Serpent

A Countryman, as Æsop certifies,
A charitable man, but not so wise,
One day in winter found,
Stretch'd on the snowy ground,
A chill'd or frozen Snake,
As torpid as a stake,
And, if alive, devoid of sense.
He took him up, and bore him home,
And, thinking not what recompense
For such a charity would come,
Before the fire stretch'd him,
And back to being fetch'd him.
The Snake scarce felt the genial heat
Before his heart with native malice beat.
He raised his head, thrust out his forkèd tongue,
Coil'd up, and at his benefactor sprung.
"Ungrateful wretch!" said he, "is this the way
My care and kindness you repay?
Now you shall die." With that his axe he takes,

And with two blows three serpents makes.
Trunk, head, and tail were separate snakes;
And, leaping up with all their might,
They vainly sought to reunite.

'Tis good and lovely to be kind;
But charity should not be blind;
For as to wretchedness ingrate,
You cannot raise it from its wretched state.

The Dairywoman and the Pot of Milk

A POT of Milk upon her cushioned crown,
Good Peggy hastened to the market town;
Short-clad and light, with step she went,
Not fearing any accident;
Indeed to be the nimbler tripper,
Her dress that day,
The truth to say,
Was simply petticoat and slipper.
And, thus bedight,
Good Peggy, light,
Her gains already counted,
Laid out the cash
At single dash,
Which to a hundred eggs amounted.
Three nests she made,
Which, by the aid
Of diligence and care, were hatched.

"To raise the chicks,
We'll easily fix,"
Said she, "beside our cottage thatched.
The fox must get
More cunning yet,
Or leave enough to buy a pig.
With little care,
And any fare,
He'll grow quite fat and big;
And then the price
Will be so nice
For which the pork will sell!
'Twill go quite hard
But in our yard
I'll bring a cow and calf to dwell —
A calf to frisk among the flock!"
The thought made Peggy do the same;
And down at once the milk pot came,
And perished with the shock.
Calf, cow, and pig, and chicks, adieu!
Your mistress' face is sad to view —
She gives a tear to fortune spilt;
Then, with the down-cast look of guilt,
Home to her husband empty goes,
Somewhat in danger of his blows.

Who buildeth not, sometimes, in air,
His cots, or seats, or castles fair?

From kings to dairywomen — all —
The wise, the foolish, great and small —
Each thinks his waking dream the best.
Some flattering error fills the breast:
The world, with all its wealth, is ours,
Its honours, dames, and loveliest bowers.
Instinct with valour, where alone,
I hurl the monarch from his throne;
The people glad to see him dead,
Elect me monarch in his stead,
And diadems rain on my head.
Some accident then calls me back,
And I'm no more than simple Jack!

The Monkey and the Cat

Sly Bertrand and Ratto in company sat,
(The one was a Monkey, the other a Cat,)
Co-servants and lodgers:
More mischievous codgers
Ne'er mess'd from a platter, since platters were flat.
Was anything wrong in the house or about it,
The neighbours were blameless — no mortal could doubt it;
For Bertrand was thievish, and Ratto so nice,
More attentive to cheese than he was to the mice.
One day the two plunderers sat by the fire,

Where chestnuts were roasting, with looks of
desire.
To steal them would be a right noble affair.
A double inducement our heroes drew there —
'Twould benefit them, could they swallow
their fill,
And then 'twould occasion to somebody ill.
Said Bertrand to Ratto, "My brother, to-day
Exhibit your powers in a masterly way,
And take me these chestnuts, I pray.
Which were I but otherwise fitted
(As I am ingeniously witted)
For pulling things out of the flame,
Would stand but a pitiful game."
"'Tis done," replied Ratto, all prompt to obey;
And thrust out his paw in a delicate way.
First giving the ashes a scratch,
He open'd the coveted batch;
Then lightly and quickly impinging,
He drew out, in spite of the singeing,
One after another, the chestnuts at last—
While Bertrand contrived to devour them as fast.
A servant girl enters. Adieu to the fun.
Our Ratto was hardly contented, says one.

No more are the princes, by flattery paid
For furnishing help in a different trade,
And burning their fingers to bring
More power to some mightier king.

The Lioness and the Bear

THE Lioness had lost her young;
A hunter stole it from the vale;
The forests and the mountains rung
Responsive to her hideous wail.
Nor night, nor charms of sweet repose,
Could still the loud lament that rose
From that grim forest queen.
No animal, as you might think,
With such a noise could sleep a wink.
A Bear presumed to intervene.
"One word, sweet friend," quoth she,
"And that is all, from me.
The young that through your teeth have pass'd,
In file unbroken by a fast,
Had they nor dam nor sire?"
"They had them both." "Then I desire,
Since all their deaths caused no such grievous riot,
While mothers died of grief beneath your fiat,
To know why you yourself cannot be quiet?"
"I quiet! — I! — a wretch bereaved!
My only son! — such anguish be relieved!
No, never! All for me below
Is but a life of tears and woe!"—
"But say, why doom yourself to sorrow so?"
"Alas! 'tis Destiny that is my foe."

Such language, since the mortal fall,
Has fallen from the lips of all.
Ye human wretches, give your heed;
For your complaints there's little need.
Let him who thinks his own the hardest case,
Some widowed, childless Hecuba behold,
Herself to toil and shame of slavery sold,
And he will own the wealth of heavenly grace.

The Cat and the Two Sparrows

Contemporary with a Sparrow tame
There lived a Cat; from tenderest age,
Of both, the basket and the cage
Had household gods the same.
The Bird's sharp beak full oft provoked the Cat,
Who play'd in turn, but with a gentle pat,
His wee friend sparing with a merry laugh,
Not punishing his faults by half.
In short, he scrupled much the harm,
Should he with points his ferule arm.
The Sparrow, less discreet than he,
With dagger beak made very free.
Sir Cat, a person wise and staid,
Excused the warmth with which he play'd:
For 'tis full half of friendship's art
To take no joke in serious part.
Familiar since they saw the light,

Mere habit kept their friendship good;
Fair play had never turn'd to fight,
Till, of their neighbourhood,
Another sparrow came to greet
Old Ratto grave and Saucy Pete.
Between the birds a quarrel rose,
And Ratto took his side.
"A pretty stranger, with such blows
To beat our friend!" he cried.
"A neighbour's sparrow eating ours!
Not so, by all the feline powers."
And quick the stranger he devours.
"Now, truly," saith Sir Cat,
"I know how sparrows taste by that.
Exquisite, tender, delicate!"
This thought soon seal'd the other's fate.
But hence what moral can I bring?
For, lacking that important thing,
A fable lacks its finishing:
I seem to see of one some trace,
But still its shadow mocks my chase.

The Sick Stag

A Stag, where stags abounded,
Fell sick and was surrounded
Forthwith by comrades kind,
All — pressing to assist,

Or see, their friend, at least,
And ease his anxious mind —
An irksome multitude.
"Ah, sirs!" the sick was fain to cry,
"Pray leave me here to die,
As others do, in solitude.
Pray, let your kind attentions cease,
Till death my spirit shall release.'
But comforters are not so sent:
On duty sad full long intent,
When Heaven pleased, they went:
But not without a friendly glass;
That is to say, they cropp'd the grass
And leaves which in that quarter grew,
From which the sick his pittance drew.
By kindness thus compell'd to fast,
He died for want of food at last.

The men take off no trifling dole
Who heal the body, or the soul.
Alas the times! do what we will,
They have their payment, cure or kill.

The Wolf and the Fox

"Dear Wolf," complain'd a hungry Fox,
"A lean chick's meat, or veteran cock's,
Is all I get by toil or trick:

Of such a living I am sick.
With far less risk, you've better cheer;
A house you need not venture near,
But I must do it, spite of fear.
Pray, make me master of your trade.
And let me by that means be made
The first of all my race that took
Fat mutton to his larder's hook:
Your kindness shall not be repented."
The Wolf quite readily consented.
"I have a brother, lately dead:
Go fit his skin to yours," he said.
'Twas done; and then the wolf proceeded:
"Now mark you well what must be done
The dogs that guard the flock to shun."
The Fox the lessons strictly heeded.
At first he boggled in his dress;
But awkwardness grew less and less,
Till perseverance gave success.
His education scarce complete,
A flock, his scholarship to greet,
Came rambling out that way.
The new-made Wolf his work began,
Amidst the heedless nibblers ran,
And spread a sore dismay.
The bleating host now surely thought
That fifty wolves were on the spot:
Dog, shepherd, sheep, all homeward fled,

And left a single sheep in pawn,
Which Reynard seized when they were gone.
But, ere upon his prize he fed,
There crow'd a cock near by, and down
The scholar threw his prey and gown,
That he might run that way the faster —
Forgetting lessons, prize and master.

Reality, in every station,
Will burst out on the first occasion.

The Woods and the Woodman

A CERTAIN Wood-chopper lost or broke
From his axe's eye a bit of oak.
The forest must needs be somewhat spared
While such a loss was being repair'd.
Came the man at last, and humbly pray'd
That the Woods would kindly lend to him —
A moderate loan — a single limb,
Whereof might another helve be made,
And his axe should elsewhere drive its trade.
Oh, the oaks and firs that then might stand,
A pride and a joy throughout the land,
For their ancientness and glorious charms!
The innocent Forest lent him arms;
But bitter indeed was her regret;
For the wretch, his axe new-helved and whet,

Did nought but his benefactress spoil
Of the finest trees that graced her soil;
And ceaselessly was she made to groan,
Doing penance for that fatal loan.

Behold the world-stage and its actors,
Where benefits hurt benefactors!
A weary theme, and full of pain;
For where's the shade so cool and sweet,
Protecting strangers from the heat,
But might of such a wrong complain?
Alas! I vex myself in vain;
Ingratitude, do what I will,
Is sure to be the fashion still.

The Shepherd and the Lion

The Fable Æsop tells is nearly this:
A Shepherd from his flock began to miss,
And long'd to catch the stealer of his sheep.
Before a cavern, dark and deep,
Where wolves retired by day to sleep,
Which he suspected as the thieves,
He set his trap among the leaves;
And, ere he left the place,
He thus invoked celestial grace:
"O king of all the powers divine,
Against the rogue but grant me this delight,

That this my trap may catch him in my sight,
And I, from twenty calves of mine,
Will make the fattest thine."
But while the words were on his tongue,
Forth came a Lion great and strong.
Down crouch'd the man of sheep, and said,
With shivering fright half dead,
"Alas! that man should never be aware
Of what may be the meaning of his prayer!
To catch the robber of my flocks,
O king of gods, I pledged a calf to thee:
If from his clutches thou wilt rescue me,
I'll raise my offering to an ox."

The Animals Sick of the Plague

The sorest ill that Heaven hath
Sent on this lower world in wrath —
The Plague (to call it by its name)
One single day of which
Would Pluto's ferryman enrich —
Waged war on beasts, both wild and tame.
They died not all, but all were sick:
No hunting now, by force or trick,
To save what might so soon expire,
No food excited their desire;
Nor wolf nor fox now watch'd to slay
The innocent and tender prey.

The turtles fled;
So love and therefore joy were dead.
The Lion council held, and said:
"My friends, I do believe
This awful scourge, for which we grieve,
Is for our sins a punishment
Most righteously by Heaven sent.
Let us our guiltiest beast resign,
A sacrifice to wrath divine.
Perhaps this offering, truly small,
May gain me life and health of all.
By history we find it noted
That lives have been just so devoted.
Then let us all turn eyes within,
And ferret out the hidden sin.
Himself let no one spare nor flatter,
But make clean conscience in the matter.
For me, my appetite has play'd the glutton
Too much and often upon mutton.
What harm had e'er my victims done?
I answer, truly, None.
Perhaps, sometimes, by hunger press'd,
I've eat the shepherd with the rest.
I yield myself, if need there be;
And yet I think, in equity,
Each should confess his sins with me;
For laws of right and justice cry,
The guiltiest alone should die."

"Sire," said the Fox, "your majesty
Is humbler than a king should be,
And over-squeamish in the case.
What! eating stupid sheep a crime?
No, never, sire, at any time.
It rather was an act of grace,
A mark of honour to their race.
And as to shepherds, one may swear,
The fate your majesty describes
Is recompense less full than fair
For such usurpers o'er our tribes."

Thus Reynard glibly spoke,
And loud applause from flatterers broke.
Of neither tiger, boar, nor bear,
Did any keen inquirer dare
To ask for crimes of high degree;
The fighters, biters, scratchers, all
From every mortal sin were free;
The very dogs, both great and small,
Were saints, as far as dogs could be.

The Ass, confessing in his turn,
Thus spoke in tones of deep concern:
"I happen'd through a mead to pass;
The monks, its owners, were at mass;
Keen hunger, leisure, tender grass,
And add to these the devil too,
All tempted me the deed to do.

I browsed the bigness of my tongue;
Since truth must out, I own it wrong."

On this, a hue and cry arose,
As if the beasts were all his foes:
A Wolf, haranguing lawyer-wise,
Denounced the Ass for sacrifice —
The bald-pate, scabby, ragged lout,
By whom the plague had come, no doubt.
His fault was judged a hanging crime.
"What? eat another's grass? O shame!
The noose of rope and death sublime,
For that offence, were all too tame!"
And soon poor Grizzle felt the same.

Thus human courts acquit the strong,
And doom the weak, as therefore wrong.

The Fowler, the Hawk, and the Lark

From wrongs of wicked men we draw
Excuses for our own;
Such is the universal law.
Would you have mercy shown,
Let yours be clearly known.

A Fowler's mirror served to snare
The little tenants of the air.
A Lark there saw her pretty face,
And was approaching to the place.

A Hawk, that sailed on high,
Like vapour in the sky,
Came down, as still as infant's breath,
On her who sang so near her death.
She thus escaped the Fowler's steel,
The Hawk's malignant claws to feel.
While in his cruel way,
The pirate plucked his prey,
Upon himself the net was sprung.
"O Fowler," prayed he in the hawkish tongue,
"Release me in thy clemency!
I never did a wrong to thee.
The man replied, "'Tis true;
And did the Lark to you?"

Phœbus and Boreas

Old Boreas and the Sun, one day,
Espied a traveller on his way,
Whose dress did happily provide
Against whatever might betide.
The time was autumn, when, indeed,
All prudent travellers take heed.
The rains that then the sunshine dash,
And Iris with her splendid sash,
Warn one who does not like to soak
To wear abroad a good thick coat.
Our man was therefore well bedight

With double mantle, strong and tight.
"This fellow," said the Wind, "has meant
To guard from every ill event;
But little does he wot that I
  Can blow him such a blast
  That, not a button fast,
His cloak shall cleave the sky.
Come, here's a pleasant game, Sir Sun!
  Wilt play?" Said Phœbus, "Done!
  We'll bet between us here
  Which first will take the gear
  From off this cavalier.
  Begin, and shut away
  The brightness of my ray."
"Enough." Our blower, on the bet,
  Swelled out his pursy form
  With all the stuff for storm —.
The thunder, hail, and drenching wet,
And all the fury he could muster;
Then, with a very demon's bluster,
He whistled, whirled, and splashed,
And down the torrents dashed,
  Full many a roof uptearing
    He never did before,
  Full many a vessel bearing
    To wreck upon the shore —
  And all to doff a single cloak.
  But vain the furious stroke;

The traveller was stout,
And kept the tempest out,
Defied the hurricane,
Defied the pelting rain;
And as the fiercer roared the blast,
His cloak the tighter held he fast.
The Sun broke out, to win the bet;
He caused the clouds to disappear,
Refreshed and warmed the cavalier,
And through his mantle made him sweat,
Till off it came, of course,
In less than half an hour;
And yet the Sun saved half his power —
So much does mildness more than force.

The Stag and the Vine

A Stag, by favour of a Vine,
Which grew where suns most genial shine,
And formed a thick and matted bower
Which might have turned a summer shower,
Was saved by ruinous assault.
The hunters thought their dogs at fault,
And called them off. In danger now no more
The Stag, a thankless wretch and vile,
Began to browse his benefactress o'er.
The hunters listening the while,
The rustling heard, came back,

With all their yelping pack,
And seized him in that very place.
"This is," said he, "but justice, in my case.
Let every black ingrate
Henceforward profit by my fate."
The dogs fell to —'twere wasting breath
To pray those hunters at the death.
They left, and we will not revile 'em,
A warning for profaners of asylum.

The Peacock Complaining to Juno

The Peacock to the Queen of heaven
Complained in some such words:
"Great goddess, you have given
To me, the laughing stock of birds,
A voice which fills, by taste quite just,
All nature with disgust;
Whereas that little paltry thing,
The nightingale, pours from her throat
So sweet and ravishing a note;
She bears alone the honours of the spring."
In anger Juno heard,
And cried, "Shame on you, jealous bird!
Grudge you the nightingale her voice,
Who in the rainbow neck rejoice,
Than costliest silks more richly tinted,
In charms of grace and form unstinted —

Who strut in kingly pride,
Your glorious tail spread wide
With brilliants which in sheen do
Outshine the jeweller's bow window?
Is there a bird beneath the blue
That has more charms than you?
No animal in everything can shine.
By just partition of our gifts divine,
Each has its full and proper share.
Among the birds that cleave the air
The hawk's a swift, the eagle is a brave one,
For omens serves the hoarse old raven,
The rook's of coming ills the prophet;
And if there's any discontent,
I've heard not of it.
Cease, then, your envious complaint;
Or I, instead of making up your lack,
Will take your boasted plumage from your back."

The Eagle and the Beetle

John Rabbit, by Dame Eagle chased,
Was making for his hole in haste,
When, on his way, he met a Beetle's burrow.
I leave you all to think
If such a little chink
Could to a rabbit give protection thorough.
But, since no better could be got,

John Rabbit, there was fain to squat.
Of course, in an asylum so absurd,
John felt ere long the talons of the bird.
But first the Beetle, interceding, cried,
"Great queen of birds, it cannot be denied
That, maugre my protection, you can bear
My trembling guest, John Rabbit, through the air,
But do not give me such affront, I pray;
And since he craves your grace,
In pity of his case,
Grant him his life, or take us both away;
For he's my gossip, friend and neighbour."
In vain the Beetle's friendly labour;
The Eagle clutched her prey without reply,
And as she flapped her vasty wings to fly,
Struck down our orator and stilled him —
The wonder is she hadn't killed him.
The Beetle soon, of sweet revenge in quest
Flew to the old, gnarled mountain oak,
Which proudly bore that haughty Eagle's nest.
And while the bird was gone,
Her eggs, her cherished eggs, he broke,
Not sparing one.
Returning from her flight, the Eagle's cry
Of rage and bitter anguish filled the sky.
But, by excess of passion blind,
Her enemy she failed to find.

Her wrath in vain, that year it was her fate
To live a mourning mother, desolate.
The next, she built a loftier nest; 'twas vain;
The Beetle found and dashed her eggs again.

John Rabbit's death was thus avenged anew.
The second mourning for her murdered brood
Was such that through the giant mountain wood,
For six long months, the sleepless echo flew.
The bird, once Ganymede, now made
Her prayer to Jupiter for aid;
And, laying them within his godship's lap,
She thought her eggs now safe from all mishap;
The god his own could not but make them —
No wretch would venture there to break them.
And no one did. Their enemy, this time,
Upsoaring to a place sublime,
Let fall upon his royal robes some dirt,
Which Jove just shaking, with a sudden flirt,
Threw out the eggs, no one knows whither.
When Jupiter informed her how th' event
Occurred by purest accident,
The Eagle raved; there was no reasoning with her;
She gave out threats of leaving court,
To make the desert her resort,
And other brav'ries of this sort.
Poor Jupiter in silence heard
The uproar of his favourite bird.

Before his throne the Beetle now appeared,
And by a clear complaint the mystery cleared.
The god pronounced the Eagle in the wrong.
But still, their hatred was so old and strong,
These enemies could not be reconciled;
And, that the general peace might not be spoiled —
The best that he could do — the god arranged
That thence the Eagle's pairing should be changed,
To come when Beetle folks are only found
Concealed and dormant under ground.

FABLES FROM THE SPANISH
OF
CARLOS YRIARTE*

"As the impressions made upon a new vessel are not easily to be effaced, so here youth are taught prudence through the allurement of fable."

*Translated by Richard Andrews

FABLES FROM THE SPANISH

The Bee and the Cuckoo

A CUCKOO, near a hive, one day,
Was chaunting in his usual way,
When to the door the Queen-bee ran,
And, humming angrily, began:
"Do cease that tuneless song I hear —
How can we work while thou art near?
There is no other bird, I vow,
Half so fantastical as thou,
Since all that ugly voice can do,
Is to sing on — 'Cuckoo! cuckoo'!"

"If my monotony of song
Displeases you, shall I be wrong,"
The Cuckoo answered, "if I find
Your comb has little to my mind?
Look at the cells — through every one
Does not unvaried sameness run?
Then if in me there's nothing new,
Dear knows, all's old enough in you."
The Bee replied: "Hear me, my friend,
In works that have a useful end

It is not always worth the while
To seek variety in style,
But if those works whose only views
Are to give pleasure and amuse,
Want either fancy or invention,
They fail of gaining their intention."

The Rope Dancer and His Pupil

A Tight-rope Dancer who, they say,
Was a great master in his way,
Was tutoring a Youth to spring
Upon the slight and yielding string,
Who, though a novice in the science,
Had in his talents great reliance,
And, as on high his steps he tried,
Thus to his sage instructor cried:
"This pole you call the counterpoise
My every attitude annoys;
I really cannot think it good
To use this cumbrous piece of wood
In such a business as ours,
An art requiring all our powers.
Why should I with this burden couple?
Am I not active, strong and supple?
So — see me try this step without it,
I'll manage better, do not doubt it —
See, 'tis not difficult at all,"

He said, and let the balance fall,
And, taking fearlessly a bound,
He tumbled headlong on the ground,
With compound fracture of the shin,
And six or seven ribs crushed in.

"Unhappy youth!" the Master said,
"What was your truest help and aid
Impediment you thought to be —
For art and method if you flee,
Believe me, ere your life is past,
This tumble will not be your last."

The Squirrel and the Horse

A Squirrel, on his hind legs raised.
Upon a noble Charger gazed,
Who docile to the spur and rein,
Went through his ménage on the plain;
Now seeming like the wind to fly,
Now gracefully curvetting by.
"Good Sir," the little Tumbler said,
And with much coolness, scratched his head,
"In all your swiftness, skill and spirit,
I do not see there's much of merit,
For, all you seem so proud to do,
I can perform, and better too;
I'm light and nimble, brisk and sprightly,

I trot, and skip, and canter lightly,
Backward and forward — here and there,
Now on the earth — now in the air —
From bough to bough — from hill to hill,
And never for a moment still."
The Courser tossed his head on high;
And made the Squirrel this reply:
"My little nimble jealous friend,
Those turns and tumbles without end —
That hither, thither, restless springing —
Those ups and downs and leaps and swinging —
And other feats more wondrous far,
Pray tell me, of what use they are?
But what I do, this praise may claim —
My master's service is my aim,
And laudably I use for him
My warmth of blood and strength of limb."

The Bear, the Monkey, and the Pig

A Bear with whom a Piedmontese
Had voyaged from the Polar seas,
And by whose strange unwieldy gambols
He earned a living in his rambles,
One day, upon his hind legs set,
Began to dance a minuet.
At length, being tired, as well he might,
Of standing such a time upright,

He to a Monkey near advancing,
Exclaimed: "What think you of my dancing?"
"Really," he said, "ahem!" (I'm sure
This Monkey was a connoisseur)
"To praise it, I'd indeed be glad,
Only it is so very bad!"
"How!" said the Bear, not over pleased,
"Surely, your judgment is diseased,
Or else you cannot well have seen
My elegance of step and mien;
Just look again, and say what graces
You think are wanting in my paces."
"Indeed, his taste is quite amazing,"
Replied a Pig with rapture gazing;
"Bravo! encore! well done! Sir Bear,
By heaven, you trip as light as air;
I vow that Paris never knew
A dancer half so fine as you."

With some confusion, Bruin heard
Such praises by a Pig conferred;
He communed with himself a while,
And muttered thus, in altered style:
"I must confess the Monkey's blame
Made me feel doubtful of my fame;
But since the Pigs their praise concede,
My dancing must be bad, indeed!"

The Muff, the Fan, and the Parasol

"It sounds presumptuous and ill
To boast of universal skill,
But 'tis a scarce less fault, I own,
To serve one sort of use alone."
An idle Parasol, one day,
Within a lady's chamber lay,
And having nothing else to do,
Addressing his companions two,
Reclining near, a Muff and Fan,
He thus insultingly began,
Using a form of dialect,
In which, if Æsop is correct,
The Brass and Earthern Jars, of old,
Conversed as down the stream they rolled.
"Oh! sirs, ye merit mighty praise!
Yon Muff may do for wintry days,
A corner is your lot in spring;
While you, Fan, are a useless thing
When cold succeeds to heat; for neither
Can change yourself to suit the weather
Learn, if you're able to possess,
Like me a double usefulness,
From winter's rain I help to shun
And guard in summer from the sun."

The Duck and the Serpent

A SELF-CONCEITED Duck, one day,
Was waddling from her pond away:
"What other race can boast," she cried,
"The many gifts to ours allied?
Earth — water — air — are all for us.
When I am tired of walking thus,
I fly, if so I take the whim,
Or if it pleases me I swim."
A cunning Serpent overheard
The boasting of the clumsy bird,
And, with contempt and scorn inflamed,
Came hissing up, and thus exclaimed:
"It strikes me, ma'am, there's small occasion
For your just uttered proclamation;
These gifts of yours shine rather dim,
Since neither like the trout you swim,
Nor like the deer, step swift and light,
Nor match the eagle in your flight."
They err who think that merit clings
To knowledge slight of many things;
He who his fellows would excel,
Whate'er he does should do it well.

The Tea and the Sage

THE Tea from China on her way,
Met in some sea, or gulf, or bay —

(Would to her log I might refer!)
The Sage, who thus accosted her:
"Sister — ahoy! ho — whither bound?"
"I leave," she said, "my native ground
For Europe's markets, where, I'm told,
They purchase me by weight of gold."
"And I," the Sage replied, "am seeking
The route to Canton or to Peking;
Your Chinese use me largely in
Their cookery and medicine;
They know my virtues, nor deny
The praise I ask, however high,
While Europe scorns me, just indeed,
As if I was the vilest weed.
Go; and good luck t'ye; know full well
That you are sure enough to sell,
For nations all, (fools that they are!)
Value whatever comes from afar,
And give their money nothing loth,
For anything of foreign growth."

The Swan and the Linnet

Piqued at the Linnet's song one day,
The Swan exclaimed: "Leave off! I say --
Be still, you little noisy thing!
What!— dare *you* challenge me to sing,
When there's no voice, however fine,

Can match the melody of mine?"
(The Linnet warbled on) — "D'ye hear?
This impudence may cost you dear;
I could with one harmonious note
Forever stop your squeaking throat,
And, if I do not choose to try,
Respect my magnanimity."
"I wish," at length the Linnet said,
"I wish, to heaven, the proof were made;
You cannot imagine how I long
To hear that rich and flowing song
Which though so sweet, by fame averred,
I know not who has ever heard."

The Swan essayed to sing, but — whew!
She screeched and squalled a note or two,
Until the Linnet, it appears,
Took to her wings to save her ears.
'Tis strange when some of learned fame
Will prove their title to the name,
How often ill-placed praise they mar,
And show how ignorant they are.

The Flint and the Steel

The Flint, with language harsh and high,
Accused the Steel of cruelty
In striking her with all his might,
Whene'er he wanted fire and light.

The Steel the imputation spurned,
And with such warmth the contest burned
That both, at last, agreed to slip
Their contract of companionship.
"Good-by then, madame," said the one;
"And since my company you shun,
And to continue with me, doubt,
We'll see what use you are without."
"About as much as you will be,
Good sir," she answered, "without me."

FABLES OF GAY, COWPER, AND OTHERS

Brutes are my theme. Am I to blame
If men in morals are the same?
I no man call or ape or ass;
'Tis his own conscience holds the glass.
Thus void of all offence I write;
Who claims the fable, knows his right."

JOHN GAY

FABLES OF GAY AND COWPER

The Monkey Who Had Seen the World

A MONKEY, to reform the times,
Resolved to visit foreign climes;
For men in distant regions roam,
To bring politer manners home.
So forth he fares, all toil defies;
Misfortune serves to make us wise.

At length the treacherous snare was laid;
Poor Pug was caught, to town conveyed;
There sold. How envied was his doom,
Made captive in a lady's room!
Proud as a lover of his chains,
He day by day her favour gains.
Whene'er the duty of the day
The toilette calls, with mimic play
He twirls her knot, he cracks her fan,
Like any other gentleman.
In visits, too, his parts and wit,
When jests grew dull, were sure to hit.
Proud with applause, he thought his mind
In every courtly art refined;
Like Orpheus, burned with public zeal

To civilize the monkey weal:
So watched occasion, broke his chain,
And sought his native woods again.
  The hairy sylvans round him press
Astonished at his strut and dress.
Some praise his sleeve, and others gloat
Upon his rich embroidered coat;
His dapper periwig commending,
With the black tail behind depending;
His powdered back above, below,
Like hoary frost or fleecy snow:
But all, with envy and desire,
His flutt'ring shoulder-knot admire.
  "Hear and improve," he pertly cries,
"I come to make a nation wise.
Weigh your own worth, support your place,
The next in rank to human race.
In cities long I passed my days,
Conversed with men, and learned their ways.
Their dress, their courtly manners see;
Reform your state, and copy me.
Seek ye to thrive? in flatt'ry deal;
Your scorn, your hate, with that conceal.
Seem only to regard your friends,
But use them for your private ends.
Stint not to truth the flow of wit;
Be prompt to lie whene'er 'tis fit.
Bend all your force to spatter merit;

Scandal is conversation's spirit.
Boldly to everything pretend,
And men your talents shall commend.
I know the Great. Observe me right,
So shall you grow like man polite."
He spoke and bowed. With mutt'ring jaws
The wond'ring circle grinned applause.
Now, warmed with malice, envy, spite,
Their most obliging friends they bite;
And, fond to copy human ways,
Practise new mischiefs all their days.
Thus the dull lad, too tall for school.
With travel finishes the fool:
Studious of every coxcomb's airs,
He gambles, dresses, drinks, and swears;
O'er looks with scorn all virtuous arts,
For vice is fitted to his parts.

JOHN GAY

The Shepherd's Dog and the Wolf

A WOLF, with hunger fierce and bold,
Ravag'd the plains, and thinn'd the fold:
Deep in the wood secure he lay,
The thefts of night regal'd the day.
In vain the shepherd's wakeful care
Had spread the toils, and watch'd the snare:
In vain the Dog pursu'd his pace,
The fleeter robber mock'd the chase.

As Lightfoot rang'd the forest round,
By chance his foe's retreat he found.
"Let us a while the war suspend,
And reason as from friend to friend."
"A truce?" replies the Wolf. "'Tis done."
The Dog the parley thus begun.
"How can that strong intrepid mind
Attack a weak defenceless kind?
Those jaws should prey on nobler food,
And drink the boar's and lion's blood,
Great souls with generous pity melt,
Which coward tyrants never felt.
How harmless is our fleecy care!
Be brave, and let thy mercy spare.'
"Friend," says the Wolf, "the matter weigh;
Nature design'd us beasts of prey;
As such, when hunger finds a treat,
'Tis necessary Wolves should eat.
If mindful of the bleating weal,
Thy bosom burn with real zeal,
Hence, and thy tyrant lord beseech;
To him repeat the moving speech:
A Wolf eats sheep but now and then;
Ten thousands are devour'd by men.
An open foe may prove a curse,
But a pretended friend is worse."

JOHN GAY

The Rat-catcher and Cats

THE rats by night such mischief did,
Betty was ev'ry morning chid.
They undermin'd whole sides of bacon,
Her cheese was sapp'd, her tarts were taken.
Her pasties, fenc'd with thickest paste,
Were all demolish'd, and laid waste.
She curs'd the cat for want of duty,
Who left her foes a constant booty.
An Engineer, of noted skill,
Engag'd to stop the growing ill.
From room to room he now surveys
Their haunts, their works, their secret ways;
Finds where they 'scape an ambuscade.
And whence the nightly sally's made.
An envious Cat from place to place,
Unseen, attends his silent pace.
She saw, that if his trade went on,
The purring race must be undone;
So, secretly removes his baits,
And ev'ry stratagem defeats.
Again he sets the poison'd toils,
And Puss again the labour foils.
"What foe, to frustrate my designs,
My schemes thus nightly countermines?"
Incens'd, he cries: "This very hour
This wretch shall bleed beneath my power."

So said, a pond'rous trap he brought,
And in the fact poor Puss was caught.
"Smuggler," says he, "thou shalt be made
A victim to our loss of trade."
The captive Cat, with piteous mews,
For pardon, life, and freedom sues.
"A sister of the science spare;
One int'rest is our common care."
"What insolence!" the man replies;
"Shall Cats with us the game divide?
Were all your interloping band
Extinguish'd, or expell'd the land,
We Rat-catchers might raise our fees.
Sole guardians of a nation's cheese!"
A Cat, who saw the lifted knife,
Thus spoke and sav'd her sister's life.
"In ev'ry age and clime we see
Two of a trade can ne'er agree.
Each hates his neighbour for encroaching;
'Squire stigmatizes 'squire for poaching;
Beauties with beauties are in arms.
And scandal pelts each other's charms;
Kings too their neighbour kings dethrone,
In hope to make the world their own.
But let us limit our desires;
Not war like beauties, kings, and 'squires!
For though we both one prey pursue,
There's game enough for us and you."

JOHN GAY

The Farmer's Wife and the Raven

Between her swaggering pannier's load
A Farmer's Wife to market rode,
And jogging on, with thoughtful care,
Summed up the profits of her ware;
When, starting from her silver dream,
Thus far and wide was heard her scream:
"That Raven on yon left-hand oak
(Curse on his ill-betiding croak)
Bodes me no good." No more she said,
When poor blind Ball, with stumbling head,
Fell prone; o'erturned the panniers lay,
And her mashed eggs bestrewed the way.
She, sprawling on the yellow road,
Railed, cursed, and swore: "Thou croaking toad,
A murrain take thy noisy throat!
I knew misfortune in the note."
"Dame," quoth the Raven, "spare your oaths,
Unclench your fist and wipe your clothes.
But why on me those curses thrown?
Goody, the fault was all your own;
For had you laid this brittle ware
On Dun, the old sure-footed mare,
Though all the Ravens of the hundred
With croaking had your tongue out-thundered,
Sure-footed Dun had kept her legs,
And you, good woman, saved your eggs."

John Gay

The Council of Horses

Upon a time, a neighing steed,
Who grazed among a numerous breed,
With mutiny had fired the train,
And spread dissension through the plain.
On matters that concerned the state
The Council met in grand debate.
A Colt, whose eyeballs flamed with ire,
Elate with strength and youthful fire,
In haste stepped forth before the rest,
And thus the listening throng addressed:

"Good gods! how abject is our race,
Condemned to slavery and disgrace!
Shall we our servitude retain
Because our sires have borne the chain?
Consider, friends, your strength and might;
'Tis conquest to assert your right.
How cumb'rous is the gilded coach!
The pride of man is our reproach.
Were we designed for daily toil;
To drag the ploughshare through the soil;
To sweat in harness through the road;
To groan beneath the carrier's load?
How feeble are the two-legged kind!
What force is in our nerves combined!
Shall, then, our nobler jaws submit

To foam, and champ the galling bit?
Shall haughty man my back bestride?
Shall the sharp spur provoke my side?
Forbid it, heavens! Reject the rein;
Your shame, your infamy, disdain.
Let him the lion first control,
And still the tiger's famished growl;
Let us, like them, our freedom claim,
And make him tremble at our name."

A general nod approved the cause,
And all the circle neighed applause,
When, lo! with grave and solemn face,
A Steed advanced before the race,
With age and long experience wise;
Around he cast his thoughtful eyes,
And to the murmurs of the train
Thus spoke the Nestor of the plain:
"When I had health and strength like you,
The toils of servitude I knew;
Now grateful man rewards my pains,
And gives me all these wide domains.
At will I crop the year's increase;
My latter life is rest and peace.
I grant, to man we lend our pains,
And aid him to correct the plains;
But doth he not divide the care
Through all the labours of the year?

How many thousand structures rise
To fence us from inclement skies!
For us he bears the sultry day,
And stores up all our winter's hay:
He sows, he reaps the harvest's gain,
We share the toil and share the grain.
Since every creature was decreed
To aid each other's mutual need,
Appease your discontented mind,
And act the part by Heaven assigned."
The tumult ceased. The colt submitted,
And, like his ancestors, was bitted.

JOHN GAY

The Hare and Many Friends

FRIENDSHIP, like love, is but a name,
Unless to one you stint the flame;
The child whom many fathers share
Hath seldom known a father's care.
'Tis thus in friendships; who depend
On many, rarely find a friend.

A Hare, who in a civil way
Complied with everything, like Gay,
Was known by all the bestial train
Who haunt the wood or graze the plain;
Her care was never to offend,
And every creature was her friend.
As forth she went at early dawn,

To taste the dew-besprinkled lawn,
Behind she hears the hunter's cries,
And from the deep-mouthed thunder flies.
She starts, she stops, she pants for breath;
She hears the near advance of death;
She doubles to mislead the Hound,
And measures back her mazy round,
Till, fainting in the public way,
  Half dead with fear she gasping lay.
  What transport in her bosom grew
When first the Horse appeared in view!
  "Let me," says she, "your back ascend.
And owe my safety to a friend.
You know my feet betray my flight;
To friendship every burden's light,"
The Horse replied, "Poor honest Puss,
It grieves my heart to see you thus:
Be comforted, relief is near,
For all your friends are in the rear."
  She next the stately Bull implored;
And thus replied the mighty lord:
  "Since every beast alive can tell
That I sincerely wish you well,
I may without offence pretend
To take the freedom of a friend.
Love calls me hence; a fav'rite Cow
Expects me near the barley-mow,
And when a lady's in the case

You know all other things give place.
To leave you thus might seem unkind;
But see, the Goat is just behind."

The Goat remarked her pulse was high,
Her languid head, her heavy eye.
"My back," says she, "may do you harm.
The Sheep's at hand, and wool is warm."

The Sheep was feeble, and complained
His sides a load of wool sustained:
Said he was slow, confessed his fears;
For Hounds eat Sheep as well as Hares.

She now the trotting Calf addressed
To save from death a friend distressed.
"Shall I," says he, "of tender age,
In this important care engage?
Older and abler passed you by —
How strong are those; how weak am I!
Should I presume to bear you hence,
Those friends of mine may take offence;
Excuse me, then; you know my heart,
But dearest friends, alas! must part.
How shall we all lament! Adieu!
For see, the Hounds are just in view."

JOHN GAY

The Nightingale and the Glowworm

A NIGHTINGALE, that all day long
Had cheered the village with his song,

Nor had at eve his note suspended,
Nor yet when eventide was ended
Began to feel, as well he might,
The keen demands of appetite;
When, looking eagerly around,
He spied far off, upon the ground,
A something shining in the dark,
And knew the Glowworm by his spark;
So stepping down from hawthorn top,
He thought to put him in his crop.
The Worm, aware of his intent,
Harangued him thus, right eloquent:
"Did you admire my lamp," quoth he,
"As much as I your minstrelsy,
You would abhor to do me wrong,
As much as I to spoil your song;
For, 'twas the self-same Power Divine
Taught you to sing and me to shine;
That you with music, I with light,
Might beautify and cheer the night."
The Songster heard his short oration,
And warbling out his approbation,
Released him, as my story tells,
And found a supper somewhere else.
Hence, jarring sectaries may learn
Their real interest to discern,
That brother should not war with brother,
And worry and devour each other;

But sing and shine by sweet consent,
Until life's poor transient night is spent.
Respecting in each other's case.
The gifts of Nature and of Grace.

Those Christians best deserve the name
Who studiously make peace their aim;
Peace both the duty and the prize
Of him that creeps and him that flies.

WILLIAM COWPER

The Raven

A RAVEN, while with glossy breast
Her new-laid eggs she fondly pressed,
And on her wickerwork high mounted,
Her chickens prematurely counted,
(A fault philosophers might blame
If quite exempted from the same),
Enjoyed at ease the genial day;
'Twas April, as the bumpkins say;
The legislature called it May.
But suddenly a wind, as high
As ever swept a winter sky,
Shook the young leaves about her ears
And filled her with a thousand fears,
Lest the rude blast should snap the bough,
And spread her golden hopes below.

But just at eve the blowing weather
Changed, and her fears were hushed together:
"And now," quoth poor unthinking Ralph,[1]
"'Tis over, and the brood is safe."
(For Ravens, though, as birds of omen,
They teach both conjurers and old women
To tell us what is to befall,
Can't prophesy themselves at all.)
The morning came, when Neighbour Hodge,
Who long had marked her airy lodge,
And destined all the treasure there
A gift to his expecting fair,
Climbed, like a squirrel to his dray,
And bore the worthless prize away.

Moral

'Tis Providence alone secures,
In every change, both mine and yours:
Safety consists not in escape
From dangers of a frightful shape;
An earthquake may be bid to spare
The man that's strangled by a hair.
Fate steals along with silent tread
Found oftenest in what least we dread,
Frowns in the storm with angry brow,
But in the sunshine strikes the blow.

WILLIAM COWPER

[1] Pronounced Rafe.

Pairing Time Anticipated

I SHALL not ask Jean Jacques Rousseau
If birds confabulate or no;
'Tis clear that they were always able
To hold discourse, at least in fable;
And e'en the child who knows no better
Than to interpret by the letter
A story of a cock and bull
Must have a most uncommon skull.
It chanced then on a winter day,
But warm and bright and calm as May,
The Birds conceiving a design
To forestall sweet Saint Valentine,
In many an orchard, copse and grove,
Assembled on affairs of love,
And with much twitter, and much chatter,
Began to agitate the matter.
At length a Bullfinch, who could boast
More years and wisdom than the most,
Entreated, opening wide his beak,
A moment's liberty to speak;
And silence publicly enjoined,
Delivered, briefly, thus his mind —
"My friends! Be cautious how ye treat
The subject upon which we meet;
I fear we shall have winter yet."

A Finch, whose tongue knew no control,
With golden wing and satin poll,
A last year's bird who ne'er had tried
What marriage means, thus pert replied:
"Methinks the gentleman," quoth she,
"Opposite in the appletree,
By his good will would keep us single,
Until yonder heavens and earth shall mingle,
Or (which is likelier to befall)
Until death exterminate us all.
I marry without more ado,
My dear Dick Redcap; what say you?"

Dick heard, and tweedling, ogling, bridling,
With many a strut and many a sidling,
Attested, glad, his approbation
Of an immediate conjugation.
Their sentiments so well expressed
Influenced mightily the rest;
All paired, and each pair built a nest.

But though the birds were thus in haste,
The leaves came on not quite so fast,
And Destiny, that sometimes bears
An aspect stern on man's affairs,
Not altogether smiled on theirs.
The wind, of late breathed gently forth,
Now shifted east and east by north;

Bare trees and shrubs but ill, you know,
Could shelter them from rain or snow;
Stepping into their nests, they paddled,
Themselves were chilled, their eggs were addled,
Soon every father-bird and mother
Grew quarrelsome and pecked each other,
Parted without the least regret,
Except that they had ever met,
And learned in future to be wiser
Than to neglect a good adviser.

WILLIAM COWPER

The Poet, the Oyster, and Sensitive Plant

An OYSTER cast upon the shore
Was heard, though never heard before,
Complaining in a speech well worded,
And worthy thus to be recorded:
"Ah, hapless wretch comdemn'd to dwell
Forever in my native shell,
Ordain'd to move when others please,
Not for my own content or ease,
But toss'd and buffeted about,
Now in the water, and now out.
'Twere better to be born a stone
Of ruder shape and feeling none,
Than with a tenderness like mine,
And sensibilities so fine!

I envy that unfeeling shrub,
Fast rooted against every rub."
The plant he meant grew not far off,
And felt the sneer with scorn enough;
Was hurt, disgusted, mortified,
And with asperity replied.
("When," cry the botanists, and stare,
"Did plants call'd Sensitive grow there?"
No matter when — a poet's muse is
To make them grow just where she chooses):
"You shapeless nothing in a dish,
You that are but almost a fish,
I scorn your coarse insinuation,
And have most plentiful occasion
To wish myself the rock I view,
Or such another dolt as you.
For many a grave and learned clerk,
And many a gay unletter'd spark,
With curious touch examines me
If I can feel as well as he;
And when I bend, retire, and shrink,
Says, 'Well — 'tis more than one would think.'
Thus life is spent! oh fie upon't,
In being touch'd, and crying — 'Don't'!"
A poet, in his evening walk,
O'erheard and check'd this idle talk.
"And your fine sense," he said, "and yours,
Whatever evil it endures,

Deserves not, if so soon offended,
Much to be pitied or commended.
Disputes, though short, are far too long,
Where both alike are in the wrong;
Your feelings in their full amount
Are all upon your own account.

"You, in your grotto-work enclosed,
Complain of being thus exposed,
Yet nothing feel in that rough coat,
Save when the knife is at your throat.
Wherever driven by wind or tide,
Exempt from every ill beside.

"And as for you, my Lady Squeamish,
Who reckon every touch a blemish,
If all the plants that can be found
Embellishing the scene around,
Should droop and wither where they grow,
You would not feel at all, not you.
The noblest minds their virtue prove
By pity, sympathy, and love:
These, these are feelings truly fine,
And prove their owner half divine."

His censure reach'd them as he dealt it.
And each by shrinking show'd he felt it.

WILLIAM COWPER

The Pineapple and the Bee

The Pineapples, in triple row,
Were basking hot, and all in blow.
A Bee of most deserving taste
Perceived the fragrance as he pass'd.
On eager wing the spoiler came,
And search'd for crannies in the frame,
Urged his attempt on every side,
To every pane his trunk applied;
But still in vain, the frame was tight,
And only pervious to the light:
Thus having wasted half the day,
He trimm'd his flight another way.

* * * * *

Our dear delights are often such,
Exposed to view, but not to touch;
The sight our foolish heart inflames,
We long for pineapples in frames;
With hopeless wish one looks and lingers;
One breaks the glass, and cuts his fingers;
But they whom Truth and Wisdom lead,
Can gather honey from a weed.

William Cowper

Amelia and the Spider

THE muslin torn, from tears of grief
In vain Amelia sought relief;
In sighs and plaints she passed the day,
The tattered frock neglected lay:
While busied at the weaving trade,
A Spider heard the sighing maid,
And kindly stopping in a trice,
Thus offered (gratis) her advice:
"Turn, little girl, behold in me
A stimulus to industry;
Compare your woes my dear, with mine,
Then tell me who should most repine;
This morning, ere you'd left your room,
The chambermaid's relentless broom,
In one sad moment that destroyed
To build which thousands were employed.
The shock was great, but as my life
I saved in the relentless strife,
I knew lamenting was in vain,
So patient went to work again;
By constant work a day or more
My little mansion did restore.
And if each tear which you have shed
Had been a needleful of thread,
If every sigh of sad despair
Had been a stitch of proper care,

Closed would have been the luckless rent,
Nor thus the day have been misspent."

ANONYMOUS

The Goose and the Swans

A GOOSE, affected, empty, vain,
The shrillest of the cackling train,
With proud and elevated crest,
Precedence claimed above the rest.
Says she, "I laugh at human race,
Who say Geese hobble in their pace;
Look here — the slander base detect;
Not haughty man is so erect.
That Peacock yonder, see how vain
The creature's of his gaudy train.
If both were stripped, I'd pledge my word
A Goose would be the finer bird.
Nature, to hide her own defects,
Her bungled work with finery decks.
Were Geese set off with half that show,
Would men admire the Peacock? No!"
Thus vaunting, 'cross the mead she stalks,
The cackling breed attend her walks;
The sun shot down his noontide beams,
The Swans were sporting in the streams.
Their snowy plumes and stately pride
Provoked her spleen. "Why, there," she cried,

"Again, what arrogance we see!
Those creatures, how they mimic me!
Shall every fowl the waters skim
Because we Geese are known to swim?
Humility they soon shall learn,
And their own emptiness discern."
So saying, with extended wings,
Lightly upon the wave she springs;
Her bosom swells, she spreads her plumes,
And the Swan's stately crest assumes.
Contempt and mockery ensued,
And bursts of laughter shook the flood.
A Swan, superior to the rest,
Sprung forth, and thus the fool addressed:
"Conceited thing, elate with pride,
Thy affectation all deride;
These airs thy awkwardness impart,
And show thee plainly as thou art.
Among thy equals of the flock,
Thou hadst escaped the public mock;
And, as thy parts to good conduce,
Been deemed an honest, hobbling Goose.
Learn hence to study wisdom's rules;
Know, foppery's the pride of fools;
And, striving nature to conceal,
You only her defects reveal."

ANONYMOUS

The Rats and the Cheese

If Bees a government maintain,
Why may not Rats, of stronger brain
And greater power, as well be thought
By Machiavellian axioms taught?
And so they are, for thus of late
It happened in the Rats' free state.
Their prince (his subjects more to please)
Had got a mighty Cheshire Cheese,
In which his ministers of state
Might live in plenty and grow great.
A powerful party straight combined,
And their united forces joined
To bring their measures into play,
For none so loyal were as they;
And none such patriots to support
As well the country as the court.
No sooner were those Dons admitted,
But (all those wondrous virtues quitted)
They all the speediest means devise
To raise themselves and families.
Another party well observing
These pampered were, while they were starving,
Their ministry brought in disgrace,
Expelled them and supplied their place;
These on just principles were known
The true supporters of the throne.

And for the subjects' liberty,
They'd (marry, would they) freely die;
But being well fixed in their station,
Regardless of their prince and nation,
Just like the others, all their skill
Was how they might their paunches fill.
  On this a Rat not quite so blind
In state intrigues as human kind,
But of more honour, thus replied:
"Confound ye all on either side;
All your contentions are but these,
Whose arts shall best secure the Cheese."

ANONYMOUS

The Drop of Rain

A LITTLE particle of rain
  That from a passing cloud descended
Was heard thus idly to complain:
  "My brief existence now is ended!
Outcast alike of earth and sky,
Useless to live, unknown to die!"
It chanced to fall into the sea,
  And there an open shell received it;
And after years how rich was he
  Who from its prison-house released it!
The drop of rain had formed a gem
To deck a monarch's diadem.

ANONYMOUS

The Lion and the Echo

A Lion bravest of the wood,
Whose title undisputed stood,
As o'er the wide domains he prowled,
And in pursuit of booty growled,
An Echo from a distant cave
Re-growled articulately grave.
His Majesty, surprised, began
To think at first it was a man;
But, on reflection sage, he found
It was too like a lion's sound.
"Whose voice is that which growls at mine?"
His Highness asked. Says Echo, "Mine!"
"Thine," says the Lion; "who art thou?"
Echo as stern cried, "Who art thou?"
"Know I'm a lion, hear and tremble!"
Replied the king. Cried Echo, "Tremble!"
"Come forth," says Lion, "show thyself!"
Laconic Echo answered, "Elf!"
"Elf dost thou call me, vile pretender?"
Echo as loud replied, "Pretender?"
At this, as jealous of his reign,
He growled in rage — she growled again.
Incensed the more, he chafed and foamed,
And round the spacious forest roamed,
To find the rival of his throne,
Who durst with him dispute the crown.

A Fox, who listened all the while,
Addressed the monarch with a smile:
"My liege, most humbly I make bold,
Though truth may not be always told,
That this same phantom that you hear,
That so alarms your royal ear,
Is not a rival of your throne —
The voice and fears are all your own."

Imaginary terrors scare
A timorous soul with real fear!
Nay, e'en the wise and brave are cowed
By apprehensions from the crowd;
A frog a lion may disarm,
And yet how causeless the alarm!

ANONYMOUS

Here check we our career;
Long books I greatly fear;
I would not quite exhaust my stuff;
The flower of subjects is enough.

JEAN DE LA FONTAINE

THE END

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